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CATHERINE MALONE.

A DRAMA,

In Five Acts.

BY

GEORGE A. RANKIN, ESQ.

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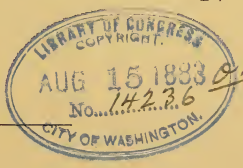

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PREFACE.

I believe it is not usual for those who write dramas to preface them, but, as I have no doubt I have in this play, violated many of the dramatic laws, it can hardly be important that I should hold this custom sacred. The writing of this play was suggested by the prevalence of a certain disease, to which, so far as I know, medicine has ascribed no name, yet which has reached an almost epidemic stage. It seems largely peculiar to men, and its severest attacks are upon those who have arrived at middle life and suddenly acquired fortunes. Another peculiarity of this distemper is, that, in the form treated of in this production, its attacks are confined exclusively to married men. As to the causes of this disorder, mentally considered, I am afraid I must confess myself ignorant; but as to its effects—the commonest looker-on in the world has observed them. That which has the most attracted my attention is an intense desire on the part of the diseased man to put away his wife and take another, which latter, by the laws of this disease, is required to be young and pretty. A case of this kind having fallen under my notice I have been at some pains in ascertaining the facts, which, with such license as they who write dramas take, are embodied in the following play.

The names of the principal participators in this drama, together with their respective relationship to one another, are as follows: Edmund and Catherine Malone, husband and wife; Carroll, Richard, Charlotte and Helen, their children; Maurice Sheboin, an old friend of Malone and his wife, and business partner of the former; Hinchman, a doctor and general attendant upon Malone during the sickness here spoken of; Glascoe, Malone's attorney in the same, and Hortens Technor, who might be described as one of the causers of Malone's illness—certainly a very unassuming array of parties out of whose acts to build a drama, and a tragedy at that;

but it so happened that these were the only people who played important parts in the affair in life, and I am too conscientious, if not too unimaginative, to invent additional ones. Of course I have not been so indiscreet as to use the real names of the dramatis personæ. The scene is laid in California, yet, if any one should object to this personality, he can, without offense to the author, remove it to South America or Alaska.

The opening of the play presupposes a number of events to have taken place, and these are made known to the reader in the early part of the drama. Malone and Sheboin were boys together, went through school and college with each other, came to California in early days, and both fell in love with the same young lady, who accepted Malone. For that lady the play is named. All that occurred a quarter of a century before the events, out of which the drama is constructed, took place; and during the interim Malone and Sheboin had followed the occupation of miners and prospectors, until a short time before the opening of the play, when they discovered the mines which made them millionaires. During this period the four children were born to Catherine and Edmund. Hinchman and Glascoe were also pioneers in California, and the former's connection with Malone dates from a spell of real sickness through which Hinchman attended him as his doctor, shortly prior to the occurrence of the facts of the play.

It is unnecessary to say to those who are in fact acquainted with the Pacific Coast that all miners are not ignorant; but for the benefit of those who have obtained their knowledge of these people from illustrated papers, I remark, that this is not a red-shirt, buckskin-breeches, broad-hat and revolver drama, and that the characters are not representatives of that class; on the contrary, that Malone, Sheboin and Hinchman are, in this play as in life, men of good natural ability, who have had the advantages of collegiate educations, whatever that may amount to; that Malone's children had received the benefit of the public schools, and that the eldest, Carroll, had read law. This much, as to the character and condition of the parties at the time the circumstances out of which the play is made, took place.

The plot is what I take to be a very simple one. Malone, after the acquirement of his wealth, discovers that his wife is not one suited to a man of his wealth and station; that she is a barrier to his progress in all directions, and he forms the determination to be rid of her. This feeling and resolution is strengthened by his meeting Hortens Technor, for whom he entertains an ardent affection, and whom he thinks would make a wife fit for a man born to such greatness. He tells Hortens nothing of his marriage, and only after she has reciprocated his feelings does she discover that fact. Malone sends his children away to school and takes Hinchman and Glascoe into his service for the purpose of procuring him a divorce. In accomplishing this he has three desires or objects in view: to keep his money, have his children go with him and have the public on his side. There was no pretense of any ground for a divorce, hence it was necessary to make one, and the only one which they could manufacture with any show of success, and which would have the three desired effects, was adultery. Catherine's commission of this crime Hinchman proposed to show, and with Sheboin as the guilty party; using his early love for Catherine, the fact that he had remained with them since their marriage, coupled with certain suspicious positions in which Hinchman proposed to place them, as forming a chain of evidence leading to proof of Catherine's infidelity. Malone now begins his career as a hypocrite. He refuses to have anything further to do with his wife, and when she comes into his presence he drives her away, making insinuations but no charges against her. He appeases Hortens' wrath, when she learns of his marriage, by telling her that his wife has been untrue to him, and that he is about to get a divorce. During one of Malone's outbursts against his wife, Richard, returning from college, comes suddenly upon them, and overhears his father abusing his mother, without their knowing of his presence. He finally extorts from his mother the nature of the treatment she is receiving from her husband, and her ignorance of the cause of it. Richard thinks it is on account of his father's desire to marry some other woman, but at Catherine's solicitation he attempts to

win his father back to her. To accomplish this he and his mother go before Malone, and as if he knew nothing of their trouble, talks to him of the sacredness of marriage, to all of which Malone assents. Excusing himself, the son retires, but within hearing distance, when Malone again begins his tirade against his wife, who having left him, Richard comes forward, and in a forcible manner makes known to his father his opinion of the cause of his treatment to his wife, all of which Malone receives with many sighs. Catherine has confided her trouble to Hinchman, who has undertaken to find out the cause of Malone's actions, but of course is unable to do so, and at last he advises her to apply to Sheboin. For this purpose he arranges a meeting between them in the park at dark. Carroll has returned, and on the evening of the meeting, he and Hinchman are walking in the park when they come upon Catherine and Sheboin. Hinchman, by attempting to take Carroll away, and other indirect means, convinces him that something is wrong. Sheboin has told Catherine that he thinks the cause of Malone's acts is his love for some other woman, at which Catherine swoons, Sheboin catches her in his arms and takes her into the conservatory. This is all misinterpreted by Carroll, who at once jumps to the conclusion that his mother is guilty. He confides his suspicions to his father, who, though nearly killed by the information, is unwilling to do anything without proof positive. This Hinchman furnishes by another meeting between Sheboin and Catherine the following night, at the same place, he having got Catherine to write Sheboin a note asking for it. This note with its answer he brings into the presence of Carroll, when, by attempts to conceal it, he arouses Carroll's suspicions that it concerns his mother. Carroll takes the letters from Hinchman against his will, and learning their contents, demands that the matter go on, averring that he will be there. Hinchman procures two bawds, and having disguised them as Catherine and Sheboin, places them in the conservatory. These Carroll see through the window, and supposing them to be his mother and Sheboin, breaks in the door. According to a prearranged plan, the bawds scream and exit through the

rear of the house. Carroll follows them, but they escape him. The noise attracts Catherine and Sheboin, who, coming upon Malone, he accuses them of criminal intimacy and drives them off. Carroll, returning from his fruitless chase, encounters his mother and attempts to kill her, but his resolution fails him. Richard and Helen now come upon the scene, and hearing Carroll denounce his mother as unchaste, Richard brands him the hired defamer of his mother. This precipitates a conflict between the two brothers, who are prevented from committing fratricide by the interposition of their mother. The noise brings Malone and Hinchman into the field, when the former commands the departure of his wife. Richard proclaims himself the defender of his mother, and he and Helen go with her. The plot is exposed by Hortens. Malone, in a moment of over-confidence, helped on by too much wine, has confessed to her, and she informs Carroll. He disbelieves her story, yet to test her honesty, brings the various parties suddenly together, when Hortens forces the confession of his guilt from Malone. A servant now enters with the announcement that Charlotte has strangled herself, and from a paper left by her the reason of her act appears to be her belief in her mother's infidelity. This brings matters to a crisis, Carroll declaring himself a coward for having lived when his sister was brave enough to die; Hortens accusing Malone of being the cause of all the trouble, brands him as her seducer and slays him, then killing herself. Carroll stabs Hinchman, and rather than be known as the son of such a man as Malone, kills himself, and the play ends with Catherine, her two remaining children and Sheboin, lamenting their loss.

It may be questioned why I have given this detailed description of the play when it would have the effect to rob it of its interest, should it ever be read by any one. The answer is here: I have been struck, as even Hinchman was, with the fact that the plot of the play is too villainous, and on this account, desire to offer some sort of an apology for its production. The plot, stated in all its baldness, does indeed seem too atrocious. That a father should attempt to show and prove to his chil-

dren the unchastity of their mother, when there was no foundation for it, appears unnatural, monstrous and beastly. And I deem it no excuse that there are other plays, which have attained even a world-wide reputation, equally as bad—prostitutes have been held up before soft-hearted audiences to be sighed and wept over, and the most blood-thirsty criminals have formed the chief characters of many tragedies. Yet it must be admitted that all this savors not a little of yellow-back literature.

This much, at least, I may say in extenuation of my offense: I have asked no one to shed a tear over the follies, the vices or the crimes of my characters, nor turned Malone and Hinchman loose to fatten on the world, nor yet sent them to heaven in white robes, with sins all blotted out; and if the vice here treated of is not shown in its most hideous form, it at least appears in the most hideous in which I am capable of robing it. More, that Malone, with all his depravity, did not desire the actual guilt of his wife, but the appearance only of it; and there is nothing in the play to deceive the audience in this respect. But if this play should ever be read or acted, and nothing seen in it save the villainy of the plot, the false reasoning of Hinchman, the depravity of Malone, aye, or the suffering of Catherine and her children, I should indeed feel sorry that I had ever written it. But if any one, looking beyond these means, should see the anarchy which follows a violation of the laws governing the marriage state, I should then feel that the object of the drama had been seen by him as by myself. To show this in as strong a light as possible, I have selected a case even so villainous; and while I have no idea that this nor any other drama will deter such men as Malone from doing acts, such as are here represented, it is at least some satisfaction to have such men shown up in their true light.

No character has been introduced into this play which I did not deem necessary; on the contrary, each one is made to play an important part, albeit, by necessity, some are more important than others. Nothing, in my judgment, so detracts from the merits of a play as a hoard of insignificant *dramatis personæ*. Moreover, I have premeditatedly excluded the fool and chamber-

maid, and now await, with something akin to half-suspended animation, the consequences of my awful crime. Everybody knows that chambermaid wit is a production confined exclusively to the stage, and, although these important individuals cut no small figures in the history of Malone, I could hardly introduce them upon the stage in the characters they have really taken, with propriety. Still again, as I take it, there is in this play but little chance for fine trappings, great mechanical contrivances and pyrotechnic displays; nay, nor the introduction of dogs, mules, and all those other great inventions of inspired genius which have so contrived to distinguish the drama. Alas! not even a female man; and what in this world, there is to render this play attractive, unless, indeed, it be the acting of the actors, I know not. Since I am about it I may as well say a word in reference to the style assumed in this play, though I should have remarked in the opening that no one need read this preface unless he wants to. The play has been written in a sort of blank verse, though I greatly fear me it would have been better had I been content with the modesty of simple prose, and shall feel hard to no one who says so. This leads to the inquiry: What is the language of the drama? Is it the ordinary talk which we hear every day, in common conversation, or in drawing-rooms, courts, banks, board, shops, and upon the street, in broils and murderous assaults? The insipidity of ordinary conversation makes it cut but a mean figure upon the stage, while the raging torrents of mingled curses, exclamations and defamations which flow from men in passion, or the piercing shrieks of one being murdered, are but ill-fitted for the ears of an assemblage of decent people. It is evident the language of the stage must rise in dignity and force above the every-day conversation; it must be more refined than the natural language of passion. But if the language above spoken of is too natural for the drama, it is equally true that that of rhyming poetry is too unnatural. Its use dissipates the idea that they are human beings who are before us, and, like many stage contrivances, but leads us from the realization of the truth of what we see. Is it, then, the unrhymed iambic pernameter, in

all the harmony and melody of its perfection? No. The steady, measured tread of its short and long syllables, as they march, with never-varying time, through line after line, while splendidly adapted for any subject which is to fix and enrapture the attention by its beauty or its sublimity, is too monotonous for the ever-changing scenes and sentiments of a drama. But when the pauses are observed, yet not too regularly, and the iambic mingled with trochaic, anapestic and dactylic feet, thus in a measure preserving the harmony while conforming to the thoughts and feelings flowing from the mind, then there is produced a language polite yet not insipid, delicate yet neither jingling nor monotonous, passionate yet not uncouth, adapted to the expression of every elevated thought and sentiment in man. Such is the language of the serious drama; and though it may not unfrequently appear to be studied, or rather, I should say, at variance with the common tongue, this objection is more than overcome by its many good qualities. Of course there are many sentiments not worthy to be clothed in this garb. Such must be content with plain prose. And now I wish to confess that I have not succeeded in this play in the use of the language which I have said above is so well-adapted to the drama, and that I know it as well as any mouse-trap critic could tell me. But if anything could be done to inspire in those who have ability to write the use of better language in dramatic productions, I should be willing to be the butt of all the ridicule which acknowledged incompetency * could heap upon me.

He who undertakes the writing of a drama has before him a task which he who never attempted it, but ill conceives. To be sure, there is no great difficulty in throwing together a lot of people who are pre-supposed to be beautiful, decking them out in fine plumage, surrounding them with elegant upholstery and pretty scenery, moved off the stage by unseen hands; in introducing a contortionist, dubbing him a wit, and throwing in a few dogs, orang-outangs and mules, for the benefit of the gods, together with such well-formed female bawds as

* The reader is at liberty to make such application of these words as he likes.

may be dragged out of houses of ill-fame, and dressed up in tights, for the benefit of aged gentlemen. These things, with a few good lady kickers and stub-nosed singers of poor ballads, may, indeed, be cast together and called a drama. But oh, what a falling off it is! How insignificant when compared to those productions of the world when in its youth, and how our age should blush that there is no one now who even dares attempt to wrestle the drama from these spoilers' hands!—this of dramatists, not actors. Yet is it no small work to be able, first, to select a subject worthy to be dramatized, and then the characters, individualizing each, making each play his own proper part at the proper time, having sentiments and doing acts corresponding to his place, purpose and position, and using language according with his character, thoughts and feeling, having in all a harmonious whole. The difficulties are innumerable. One must understand the mind and heart, and know their modes of acting; and he must know the mind and heart of each particular character with whom he deals; he must have a being capable of feeling deeply and delicately, a mind capable of both intensity and comprehension; able to look at each particular act and character in itself, and at the whole as one grand unity; he must be capable of that vision which sees the whole drama pass before him like a panorama of the mind. Nor is his trouble ended here; his play is to be acted and spoken, and many there are whose works may be silently read with rapture, yet which when spoken, fall flat as soft mud. These are some of the reasons why, while there have been many great poets, not a few eminent novelists and general writers in profusion, the great dramatists of the world might almost be counted upon the fingers of one hand. To the possession of these great qualities the author of this play makes not the slightest pretense, but he longs to see the day when there shall be an American who does, with right, lay claim to them.

The subject of this play I think worthy to be dramatized, and I have not hesitated to make the characters speak as I understand them, even at the expense of other language and sentiments I would have preferred

and made use of had I had a different conception of the actors. Thus the pompous and self-important soliloquy of Malone in the opening, as also his advice to his children, and more particularly his worked-up and assumed passion in the park scene, are all, though overstrained if not disgusting, as much in accordance with his character, as I see it, as is the slower and more measured reply of his wife to him when he impeaches her chastity, in accordance with her character. It is only when the thought occurs to Catherine that her children might think her unchaste that she is stirred to the depth of her being, and then I have tried to make the language correspond. The same may be said of the speeches and soliloquies of Carroll and Richard. I have endeavored to combine in expression the impetuosity of youth, the feelings of the sons and their noble natures. I have conscientiously attempted to avoid everything like packing, and to have all that is said or done reflect upon either the character of the parties, their mental state or the cause or effect of acts. How far short I have fallen of the accomplishment of all this, how illy I have filled even my poor idea of the drama, I know. I feel that the play not unfrequently drags, is heavy and uninteresting, and yet I have not the ability to remedy it. There are lunatics who are conscious of their insanity.

G. A. R.

San Francisco, July, 1883.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Edmund Malone.

Carroll, Richard, } *Sons of* Edmund *and* Catherine.

Maurice Sheboin.

Hinchman.

Glascoe.

Catherine.—*Wife of* Edmund Malone.

Charlotte, Helen, } *Daughters of* Edmund *and* Catherine.

Hortens Technor.

A Man.

A Woman.

A Servant.

Scene of Play—California.

CATHERINE MALONE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An elegantly furnished apartment in the country residence of Edmund Malone, near San Francisco.*

Enter MALONE.

Halting, delusive fortune has at last
The miner's cabin to a palace changed,
The clinking pick converted to a pen,
And horny hands by velvet palms displaced ;
The barren hills for fields of waving grain,
The canyon roads for arbor paths give o'er,
The slashing, swearing, stabbing, miner life,
For the refinement of the drawing-room;
Done with accursed, degrading poverty
And uncongenial work, no more, which breaks
The spirit down; and all that hoard of thoughts,
Which made me rather long for death than life,
Is buried and from my memory cast.
The past, but as a nightmare, is recalled,
The present, a resplendent glorious time,
The future—beyond the power of mind to think.
What a world, what a life, is this I see,
Which neither my dreams, imagination,
Nor yet the wildest fancies of my youth
Conceived! A world of wealth has opened up
A wealth of world; and, to my wondering eyes,
Doth burnished gold brilliantly illumine it,
And in that universe, before unknown,
A vacant throne among my fellow-men
I see, and invitation beckons me.
Around it in profusion, rich and rare,
Are sceptered monarchs, great kings of commerce,
Masters of art, men of science, statesmen learned,

And great beings of a hundred callings,
All enthroned; while down its corridors float
Enchanting strains of poetry and song.
Among its thrones, wove in rich harmony—
More beautiful than in that dismal past
My mind's eye ever did conceive—I see
The forms of women—all earth a fairy land!
Yet one, to me, o'er which a settled gloom
Is spread, lowering and black as midnight,
Which covers me as doth a pall of grief
A nation, when its best-loved ruler dies.
Charlotte and Maurice! My perturbed feelings
Care not to run against your joyous ways.

[*Exit Malone.*

Enter CHARLOTTE *and* MAURICE SHEBOIN.

Sheboin. Nay, now Lotte.

Charlotte. Yes, yes, but I will tease you Uncle Maurice—for, though you are not my uncle, I propose to call you such, even after I am so big a girl—you said you would tell me some time.

She. Well, but some other time. It's a long story and you don't want to hear it now.

Charl. Yes, now, right now; for you know I go away to school to-day, and it may be ever so long before I have another chance to hear it.

She. Say this afternoon, you little tease.

Charl. This afternoon is almost here, and what difference will that little time make? Tell me this much anyway: Was she beautiful? Did she have great dark eyes and brown hair? Was she tall or short?—stout or slender? And how did it come you did not marry her? You can tell me just this little much anyway. And who was the man who did marry her?

She. That much, little pet! why, that would be all of it.

Charl. Then tell me all, even from the first.

She. And if I do, will you make me a solemn promise never to tell a word of it to any one?

Charl. Never, as long as I live.

She. That was solemn enough. Well, now, come Sit by my side, and I will tell it you.

The story I tell is of two good friends,
One shall be nameless, and the other, I.
And in my memory is all his life
So mirrored, even from smallest childhood,
That I know not a time, I knew myself,
I knew not him; nor does the light that falls
From two twin stars in heaven, more mingle
In the eye, than run our lives together.
Our fathers and our mothers, as the tale
Has oftentimes been told us, to this land,
From the same county in old Ireland came,
Driven from thence by the same rebellion
Against proud England's haughty tyranny.
Along the banks of the Miami River
Our parents made their common settlement,
And when my friend and I were born, our houses
Had a double birthday—so are we aged.
And from the time our feet could cross the road
Which joined our fathers' farms, so brother-like
We were that I, nor he, did scarcely know
Which were our parents. The same books we read,
Went to the same village school and college,
Swore by many an oft repeated oath
We'd stand through life and die together. Then,
When the burnished light from this golden State
Glittering above deserts and mountains
Lured the brave Argonauts to these shores,
The moment that it re ached my father's home,
That instant did it fall upon my friend's.

Charl. How strangely were your lives together linked!

She. Still more strangely did death link our parents;
For when the goal was all but reached, the swift
And savage messengers of death swooped down,
Leaving my friend and me homeless orphans.

Charl. Were both your parents killed? Alas! Uncle Maurice, my own father suffered the same fate.

She. Slowly we plod our weary way along,
And all but dead, the mining region reached.
Nor did our lives in this new field escape
That fatal destiny before laid out,
For here we met and loved the same young girl.

Charl. Now, Uncle Maurice, are you not making that up?

She. Than it, that I am here, is not more true.

Charl. What did you do?

She. The close connected friendship of our lives
Quick made discovery of our common loves,
Which being done we knew not how to act—
Whether to storm and rage, draw daggers fierce,
Challenge, tell lies, make plots, turn cunning knaves,
Or fall a weeping on each other's necks,
As in the theatres we had oft seen done,
Twixt these extremes we struck a middle course,
Which was to go and lay our common loves
Before the lady and let her be judge.

Charl. And did you really do that?

She. Even so, strange as it may seem to you;
And the lady thought we were a-joking;
But finally, by our earnest manners
Being convinced, she made evasions, and
Censured us that we came so a-wooing.
Being pressed hard and seeing we would take
No answer save that we came for, she rose,
Calm as an angel and as dignified;
She was not beautiful, but her sweet face
Wore the tenderness of divinity,
And her eyes were so soft and kind they might
Have melted a harder heart than mine was;
She had a voice so great and full, and yet,
Mellowed with such infinite gentleness,
That all the ragged urchins in the street
Would follow her, that they might shed a tear,
When she but said God's blessings on them rest.

Charl. Yes, Uncle Maurice, but what answer made she?

She. Standing so before us two thus she spoke:
"Gentlemen, friends, since I have known you each,
Each have I equally esteemed, respected;
You Maurice for all your manly qualities;
And you"—naming my friend—"for all the same,
Not any difference between you each,
Thus far, have I known; but that that something,
Which feeling here, I yet can tell not of,

Has to one, more drawn me than the other,
I do confess. It is not that one has
Greater riches, nor yet more of learning,
More of manly graces, nor all combined,
But that which e'en a rude uncultured girl,
As well as the most mighty queen can feel,
Has made me love you"—this said to my friend—
"While in truth I but respect you, Maurice,
Is my answer." Then with queenly majesty,
In honest maiden's blushes bathed, strode she
To where my friend was standing, and yielded
Her heart and hand to him. That was the end,
And so she took my blessing and my heart.

Charl. And so the other fellow got the girl. Poor Uncle Maurice! But, tell me, did it not break your friendship?

She. Nay, little pet; we had agreed on that
Before, and that it should not, we agreed.

Charl. And have you seen them since?

She. Aye, frequently, they are well off now and have quite a family, though until recently, if I mistake not, they had a hard time buffeting the world.

Charl. And do you still love her?

She. Why, Charlotte, what a question.

Charl. Well, Uncle Maurice, you need n't answer that one, but the first time I get in a similar trouble I shall come to you for advice. Good-bye, now. [*going*] [*returns*] Uncle Maurice I do so wish you had won her!

[*Exit Charlotte.*

She. Ah! Charlotte you little know your father
Was my friend—your mother that young lady.
Well, that was five and twenty years ago,
And since that day never a word of love,
Has passed my lips to Catherine Malone.
Edmund has been my brother, and his wife
My sister; and together for these years,
The desert road of poverty we've tramped,
And from the same rich laden basket,
The golden fruits of fortune now we eat.

Enter MALONE.

Mal. Well, Maurice, what think you of the mines now?

Is the fickle goddess still flirting with us, or is she really caught herself this time?

She. I think she is in earnest now. At any rate the deeper we sink into the mines the better they look.

Mal. Does it not outstrip imagination that in three little months we should have grown such mighty millionaires?—that I should own this place?—that we should on the street be pointed out as money kings?—we, even we, who yet have scarcely got the smell of blasting powder off us! Ha! Ha! Is it not wonderful how fortune deals with us! Why, Maurice, you seem to have no appreciation of our good luck. This is no delusion—it is a fact!

She. Why so it is, a good, round, solid fact,
One that can be taken into your hand,
And one you can put into your pocket,
That will make your body warm in winter,
Will keep your stomach from going empty,
Provide you comfort in a place to sleep,
And a soft bed to lay your head upon.
That which will do these things is entitled
To the name of fact; what does less than these
Is nothing but delusion, wrong labeled.

Mal. Aye, but you have spoken only the half—
The little moiety of what that fact—
Our wealth—can do for us.

She. But little else.

Mal. Why look you, Maurice! That ox that stands
Well-stalled within his owner's pen, nor thinks
Save when his belly's empty, and feels not,
Except some fly awake him, such a beast
Has all those things! To-day's great Hercules
Is money, nor never did that one
Of ancient Greece—whose labors did climax
Imagination in her greatest poets—
Do deeds that swell so mighty as ours.
High positions can this giant give us,
And all great honors can he open up;
With luxuries surround us; the sealed doors
Of society can rend asunder,
And make us centers to be looked up to,
Aye, to greatness even, he can carve the way!
Have you a doubt of it?

She. I more than doubt
That unassisted wealth can do such acts.
Mal. Then listen: On an occasion not long since,
I paid a visit to a famous city,
And certain gentlemen I there beheld,
In general appearance not unlike
Their fellows, save in this particular;
In each man's hand I saw a golden key!
She. Is it possible?—you have been dreaming!
Mal. The uses of this instrument I watched,
And behold! it unlocked every door!
I saw these men walk up the marble steps
Of gorgeous palaces, the massive doors
Of which upon their willing hinges swung
When but this golden key its shining form
Presented.
She. A sight of passing strangeness!
Mal. Strange! so it was. And yet a stranger sight
I saw, as through the stately windows peeping,
Upon the fair company I looked. Behold!
Again these men their pretty weapons use—
This time upon the hearts of fair ladies—
And never did the mists of morn more melt
Before the God of Day, than did those hearts
Before that magic instrument dissolve.
She. Indeed! I had not thought such things could be.
Mal. Aye, nor was that half my eyes beheld.
More wondrous still, I saw the time-locks
Of great merchants, bankers, men of business,
Undo themselves before it; and lawyers,
Doctors, holy ministers of the gospel,
And men of all other professions bowed
Deep before its blinding brightness!
She. Wondrous! [*With mock sincerity.*]
Mal. And when these men but walked the public ways,
The crowd stood by, each man with gaping mouth
Whispering his next: "There goes a man
With a key of gold;" though to ignore him
All strong made affectation, I observed
That each man waited with humble patience
The presentation of this mighty key

That he might be allowed the privilege
To turn before it inside out.

She. Oh, wondrous! wondrous instrument!

Mal. The citizen's and the statesman's honor
And that mammoth door which holds the highway
To great public places, all, all, before
This potent giant fell, like watery bubbles!
Of such a magic instrument we two
Are now the proud possessors! Why, Maurice,
You do not join me in my happiness?

She. As you bade me I have listened, Edmund,
Nor must you think I judge you harshly:
All with the same eyes look not upon the world,
But you with yours and I with mine, and I
See things most differently from you, and,
For my ownself, speaking as I see it,
Rather than put my gold to such base use,
I would in the deep mountain whence it come
Re-bury it, and live upon the dryest crust
The beggar's dog leaves! Edmund, for friendship
Let us no more of this, I pray you have.

[*Exit Sheboin.*

Mal. Out on a man to whom contentment means
But bed and board! I had as soon not had
My gold as not to have it serve its use.
Yet were it better I had not spoken.

[*Exit Malone.*

Enter HINCHMAN *and* GLASCOE *from opposite directions.*

Hinchman. [*Aside.*] My mind's eye what art thou doing? I have somewhere seen that fellow.

Glascoe. [*Aside.*] That face is not a foreigner to my recollection. Let me call my calendar of scoundrels. Where was't I knew him?

Hinch. My memory fails me. Well, at any rate, I have as much right here as he.

Glas. When the presence of another makes a lawyer run away, may my profession cease to be honorable.

Hinch. A doctor goes from nothing except death, and walks regretfully from that.

[*Both sit at opposite sides.*]

Glas. Ahem!

Hinch. Aho!

Glas. [*With dignity and surprise.*] I beg your pardon sir.

Hinch. Why, my dear sir, I assure you it is unnecessary; your presence is no intrusion.

Glas. Ah! thank you, sir. Your unobserved entrance must stand as an excuse for my not having spoken before.

Hinch. Pray do not mention it, sir. Have you been here long?

Glas. Not above an hour. [*Pause.*] The weather is beautiful this morning, sir.

Hinch. Divine! No country in the world can equal the climate of California, sir.

Glas. The very remark I made when I first saw it in the spring of '50.

Hinch. Why sir, I take it you are an old settler. I have the honor to be an Argonaut myself. Ah! those were glorious days, never, I fear, to again return.

Glas. Most likely not, sir—at least placer mining will never be what it once was.

Hinch. Speaking of placer mining, were you in the mines in early days?

Glas. One of the very first—at old Calamity Hill.

Hinch. The devil you say! Excuse my apparent profanity, but I happened to have been at the same place myself.

Glas. Do you know your face seemed familiar to me when you first came in—ah—I mean when you first spoke.

Hinch. I made the very self-same observation. May I have the honor to know your name?

Glas. With pleasure sir,—Glascoe.

Hinch. Glascoe, Glascoe—What was your name then? Ah! I beg your pardon, sir; my name is Hinchman.

Glas. The very devil! What, Hinchy who used to run a faro game in Jim McCrockin's saloon? Ah! I beg your pardon, sir.

Hinch. I confess the soft impeachment; and Lord, sir, how one thing does call up another! I remember now—

Glas. What, sir?

Hinch. Bill Coglass, who kept the three-card monte stand just across the hall from me.

Glas. Well, old fellow, there's no use in us '49ers denying ourselves to each other.

Hinch. Not a bit of it, especially under the circumstances; and you are Glascoe the famous lawyer of San Francisco?

Glas. I am afraid I shall have to confess that, too. You remember the affair which occurred in the saloon just before you left?

Hinch. Yes, I have a faint recollection of it—man killed or something of that kind.

Glas. Well, during the trial, in which, as you remember, I participated to some extent, I was struck with the imbecility of the ordinary run of lawyers, and observing that their principal stock in trade was mystery, I concluded to cultivate the goddess; studied law; was admitted; went to San Francisco, and you know what I now am.

Hinch. I am unable to boast of such success as you have attained, though I have had my ups and downs. I got a little smattering of medicine at the university, mostly consisting of the names of diseases, drugs, and medical phrases in general—

Glas. Ah! well I remember how you used to sling them at the boys in the saloon.

Hinch. Well, Judge, I was absolutely captivated at the gullibility of mankind in general, and more particularly with reference to the practice of the divine art of healing; so after leaving the hill I enlisted in the grand army under Marshal Death, whom I have since served to the best of my ability.

Glas. I presume you have lost no opportunity to bring glory upon your general?

Hinch. None of which I am aware. I roamed about from camp to camp seeking whom I might devour, until I finally brought up on the other side of the mountains. There I attended Malone through a severe spell of sickness, through which by some accident he succeeded in living—I always attributed it to the fact that his constitution was stronger than my medicine,—and

now he insists on my staying with him as his family physician. May I inquire why you are here?

Glas. Ostensibly to draw some deeds.

Hinch. Oh! exactly so. Do you know I think my position rather more ostensible than real, for a healthier lot you never saw. Malone has made a pile of money, and seems immensely dissatisfied with—something.

Glas. Indeed! possibly his—family—or some part of it?

Hinch. No more! Our ancient friendship may be a mutual benefit to us. But hist! here comes Malone. We may as well be strangers.

Glas. Enough. [*They sit.*]

Enter MALONE.

Mal. Ah! gentlemen, good-morning. I see you are not acquainted. Doctor Hinchman, my friend and lawyer, Judge Glascoe, of San Francisco.

Hinch. I am profoundly glad of your acquaintance, Judge Glascoe.

Glas. And I of yours, Doctor. Is this your first visit to California?

Mal. No indeed, the Doctor is an old coaster. Judge, would you be kind enough to step into the adjoining room for a few moments where I shall join you?

Glas. At your convenience, sir.

[*Exit Glascoe.*

Enter CATHERINE, CARROLL, RICHARD, CHARLOTTE *and* HELEN.

Hinch. You will excuse me as I have some matters to attend to.

[*Exit Hinchman.*

Mal. Children, you are about to quit your home,
And enter your careers at colleges.
Fixed, determined, and unalterable,
Since you were born, has my intention been,
To give you that which makes a man to hold
His head aloft among earth's greatest men;

Saying in consciousness, I am your equal,
And without the which a man is nothing
Save a craven coward, like a whipped cur,
Sneaking, crouching, and hiding from the world,—
As you know I mean an education.

Cath. But children do not—

Mal. [*Interrupting.*] Behold what a thing this ignorance is!
That makes a man in shame hang down his head,
In woman how disgusting is the sight!
Debasing, degrading, infamous, vile,
And mark you! a near relation to crime.

Cath. Oh! Edmund—

Mal. Until the present time my means have been
But meagerly sufficient to afford
The education of the common schools.
But now since fortune smiles upon us,
Money shall not be spared. Nature has dealt
Not stingily with you, and if you all
But fill the measure she has given you,
Then with the wealth which, being mine is yours,
There is no high position above the reach
Of your attainment.

Cath. Remember, children,
Of the first great importance is your health.

Mal. For guidance, to give you rules and maxims,
Never varying and infallible,
Is beyond the power of any man.
There are some essential observations
Which, still, I would upon your hearing press:
There are two worlds—one, yourselves; the other,
That you see about you—I enjoin you
Make not yourselves the slaves of either one—
Rather, become the masters of them both;
Who houses up himself within himself,
Lives but a slavish sovereign, and that man
Who lets the world become his emperor,
Is subject to a most exacting tyrant.
In that your better judgment doth approve,
Fear not to be a follower, remembering
Only he is worthy immortality
Who addeth something worthy to the world.

Who is truly great, is great in all things,
Yet are the avocations of the world
So infinite, that it were best for you
To fix your efforts steadfast upon one.
Have one eye on yourselves, the other keep
Upon the flashing world in which you live,
Wherein you will see much hypocrisy
Yet even more of virtuous honesty.
Let not yourselves become that cynic
Who seeing falsely sees but falsity.
Allow no man to do your thinking.
Spurn that coward who buys his peace of mind
By mental death. The pleasures of the world
Stint not yourselves, yet be not given over
To a luxurious abuse of them—
As in all things else, in this, hold pleasure
Your obedient servant, not your master.
Seek that middle ground between austerity
And gross familiarity—that happy,
Dignified distance, where, though respected,
You do not become a thing for handling.
Beware of all that class who think that life
Is but the fleeting moment that they speak.
They who honey you over with sweet words
Fling from you, for all such mean you no good—
But to that man who bluntly answers you,
Nor truckles, give him your ear attentive.

Carr. Deep in our memories, my father,
Shall be ensbrined the golden truths you speak,
Each listener with his best endeavors,
Sacredly observing them.

Mal. So, children, do your past lives teach me, and,
Though advice rests like a heavy armor
On the young, I still would give you, daughters,
These words additional: There are two kinds
Of women in this world you should avoid—
Each being equally contemptible.
One is basely ignorant, the other,
Frivolously fast; shun both and seek you
The rich society of those ladies,
Who, being not stupid, are yet learned,
And being not fast, are yet vivacious.

Charl. Good, kind and loving father, your daughters—
I know I speak my sister Helen's heart—
Will form a strife between them, each trying
The other to outdo in the observance
Of your good instructions.

[*Carroll crosses to Catherine.*

Mal. Come, Carroll, the carriage waits you and you may miss the train.

Carr. Yes, sir.

Cath. Carroll—my boy—thy mother can give thee
No great advice such as thy father gave;
But she can say to thee: God bless thee, son,
And keep thee from all harm.

[*Richard, Charlotte and Helen cross to Catherine.*

Carr. [*Embracing Catherine.*] The richest blessing, my loving mother,
That thy son wouldst ask, thou givest him,
And with thy priceless love none is so rich
As Carroll, none so happy.

Mal. Come, come children, you will be late.

Helen. A moment, father.

Mal. Richard.

Cath. Your father calls you, children.

All. Good-bye, mother.

Mal. [*Aside.*] Will this never end!

Cath. Good-bye, my children; thy mother's blessing,
And thy mother's heart go with thee ever.

[*Exeunt Carroll, Richard, Helen and Charlotte.*

Mal. Well?

Cath. Edmund, I would have spoken to the children a little ere they went, they may be gone so long.

Mal. And in sweet heaven's name what would you have said, madam?

Cath. [*Aside.*] Madam! I don't know, husband; some little word or other—a mother's heart would have told me.

Mal. Indeed! And is there nothing further that you wish?

Cath. No, Edmund, unless I have in somewise offended you?

Mal. Well, well; I have an engagement here with some gentlemen, to day.

Cath. Let me not stand in thy way, husband.

[*Exit Catherine.*

Mal. Stand in my way! By the gods you shall not.
Plain, plain, aye, even plain to ugliness!
Ignorant,—disgustingly ignorant!
Thou art the murderer of my advancement,
The thief who robs me of occasion, steals
My chances, lays waste my opportunities,
Stands me still; I being no better now
Than when I was a beggar; aye poorer now—
The poorest, meanest pauper in this world
Is he who has a wife of whom he is
Ashamed, or wife a husband. And shall I—
I before whom the conquest of the world
Is like a map spread out, shall I be piqued,
Humiliated, degraded, stopped?
My schemes blockaded, my life laid waste,
And all because, forsooth, I am tied down—
Spiting and shaming nature!—to a thing
Like that? No, by heavens, I shall not be!
Not though I am a villain! Quiet, my thoughts,
Here comes the Doctor. I like him well and
That he likes me I have reason to believe.
He is an enviable man—always
The master of himself, profoundly versed
In the mysteries of science, with the secrets
Of both mind and heart richly acquainted,
And withal honest to a very fault.
Into each other do our beings run,
And lock together in the fair embrace
Of good companionship.

Enter HINCHMAN.

Hinch. I see no very serious ailment
Doth possess my friend to-day—for mark you!
A bright eye and sickness are no good friends.

Mal. A greater faculty I never saw
Than that you have for seeing, from the outside,
A man's condition, thoughts and feelings inwardly.
Hinch. 'Tis not I have a greater faculty,
But mine has been more exercised than yours.
Mal. Well, be that as it may, there is something
Makes me like you, Doctor, amazingly.
Hinch. My humble thanks for all your kind expression.
The matter of our likes and dislikes, friend,
Is almost inexplicable; something,
Which no man ever yet could understand,
Goes out from one and permeates the being
Of the other; and yet it seemeth true
That the existence in one another
Of common likes and dislikes, the same tastes,
Equality in native ability,
And the general similitude of each,
Count greatly in the reckoning of love.
Thus a man having a great intellect,
Will be strongly drawn unto a woman
Of the same stamp, while an inferior one—
Though for a while he make a toy of her—
At last brings nothing save disgust.
Mal. What figure think you beauty cuts in love?
Hinch. No man with fine tastes and an æsthetic eye
Can ever love an ugly woman.
Mal. What think you, then, when she be ignorant
And ugly too?
Hinch. Why, then, that she should have
A husband ignorant and ugly too.
For ignorance, knowing not learning, and,
A priori, having no eye for beauty,
Is to the loss of either all unknown,
And is companions with its other self.
The educated man, however, seeing
At once, the ignorance and ugliness,
Compares, then magnifies and distorts them,
Till foul disgust usurps the place of love.
Mal. How clearly you diagnose diseases
Of that sort. You have not confined yourself,
To the study of mere physical man.

Hinch. No man should; he who observes the world sees much,
And he who turns his learning to good use
Befriends mankind. Seeing a bad effect,
We trace its cause; a good likewise. I see
Much of unhappiness in married life.
Whatever is must have a cause. Given
Unhappiness between a man and wife,
Now what the cause? Look at them. Perchance,
He with a great intellect, capable,
Learned, ambitious; she, ignorant, ugly,
And of capacity devoid. He has great plans,
High aspirations; she neither conceives
Nor enters into such—hence they are not
Companionable. He can not trust her.
Knowing her ignorance will disgrace him,
He is ashamed of her; shame breeds disgust.
His ambitions swamped, his life a failure,
He but exists till death, kinder than life,
Relieves him of his heavy misery.

Mal. Remarkable! Remarkable! Hinchman,
Do I not owe you something—a balance?
Of course I do. I am your debtor—I—
Let me get you a check, my dear Hinchman.

[*Exit Malone.*

Hinch. Remarkable! Remarkable! Malone,
Get me a check as quick as possible,
Make it a big one, too. What is't he means?
He said "What, if she be both ignorant
And ugly?" So! Remarkable! quite so!
I comprehend you—vain, ambitious man!—
I need money—ignorant and ugly—
Vain and ambitious—money is a friend—
Will try you a little further—money!

Enter MALONE.

Mal. A small remittance for past services—
Good services, too, my learned physician,
Who ministers, not only to the sick
And troubled body, but to the diseased heart
As well. Be you both friend and doctor.

Hinch. Ah! Malone, I, who has been kicked and cuffed
By this cold, heartless world, appreciate
The magnanimity of such a friend.
For you, who should be a prince, to take me,
Poor, homeless, and unprovided as I am,
And upon me bestow this richest gift—
A friendship any king might crave—bespeaks
The soul of one well-born to greatness! Ah!
What a future do I see before you!
As yet, the prime of life is scarcely reached,
And see! a world of wealth lies at your feet,
But to be breathed on by yourself, when it
Shall speak to millions. The art of flattery
Has my humble tongue ne'er learned, and saying
You have an intellect which justifies
Ambition's highest hopes, it speaks but cold,
Unvarnished, solemn truth. What place is there
In the great world of business you may not fill?
In politics, what station; and in polite
And cultivated society, who
May not you receive, by whom not be received?

Mal. Ah, Hinchman! Speak to me not of station,
Nor politics, nor of society;
They are to me but cups of coolest drink
But just beyond my reach, and I, a man
Upon the desert sands dying of thirst.

Hinch. What! And has my friend no high ambitions?

Mal. Aye in quantities the most plentiful.

Hinch. Surely is then all else at your command.

Mal. My friend you do not—can not understand—

Hinch. I beg your pardon, sir, if I have been,—

Mal. Hinchman, know you a skeleton?

Hinch. A strange question, asking a physician!

Mal. No, I mean not these bony parts of man—
What I refer to is a skeleton
Of the mind—a spectre, where e'er you go,
Haunting, dogging you unceasingly.

Hinch. To such things am I not entirely unknown,
As one of my profession is not like to be.

Mal. Then as friend to friend dares make confession,
I will tell you of that which bars me

From all high station and great position.
What stops me is a ghastly skeleton—
One which in my poverty I had not
Not knowing that I had it; being rich,
I know it, wherefore do I have it now. [*Exit Malone.*

Hinch. So soon! So soon! Ere yet thy virgin gold
Has got the coiner's stamp upon its face,
To let it change thee so. Hast thou given
To the rag-picker all thy old clothing,
That thou hast no reminder of the past?
Aye, but thou hast one, and one most fruitful
As a pricker of thy memory, too!
'Tis a rich legacy of thy dead life—
A skeleton thou didst aptly call it!
Well, thou art wedded to thy skeleton;
Thou must eat with it; thou must put thy kiss
Upon its most hideous, tasteless lips;
Thou must take and hug it to thy bosom;
Aye, thou must let it occupy thy bed,
And clank and rattle its disgusting bones
Against thy tender flesh; or else thou must,
By the intercession of some good friend,
Be found a means to banish thy spectre.
Ho! Hinchman, is there an occupation
For thee here? Thou hast roamed o'er the world,
Seeking thy fortunes in a hundred lands,
And finding naught but cursed poverty,
And other men thou hast seen, than whom thou
Knewest a million times as much, grow rich,
Where, in thine honesty, thou didst but starve.
Then make thee now serve thee to some purpose
The world's philosophy which thou hast garnered.

Cath. (*From without.*) Is that you, Doctor Hinchman?

Hinch. Aye, madam. And is there aught that he can do for you?

Enter CATHERINE.

Cath. Is Edmund here?

Hinch. A moment since he left.
I know not where.

Cath. O, Doctor, thou art learned

In all the wondrous things that great men know:
Canst thou tell me whether some dire disease
Has laid its fearful hold upon my husband—
Some dreadful ailment of his mind or body?

Hinch. Briefly a time ago, my dearest madam,
Your husband suffered from a serious illness;
But that he had entirely recovered
I was convinced—at least I think so.

Cath. Thou thinkst so, Doctor! But tell me truly—
Have not a fear to tell his wife, whose heart
Is strong and who has stood 'neath many a
Heavy burden—is not that ailment
Lingering in him still? Thou hast seen much
Of him; is he the same to you unchanged?

Hinch. I am quite sure that he is well, madam;
But have you seen in him aught that betoken
Illness? Mayhap in the close intimacy
Of a wife, you have seen that which I,
In simple observation, unnoticed
Have let pass.

Cath. Only as thou art his doctor
Would I to thee tell it, and then if there
Be power in the art of which thou be
The master to make him well, oh, do it!
Not in the married intimacy of which
Thou speakest, but in the lack of it,
Have I beheld in him such monster changes.
He who was once so gentle and so kind,
Is now become so harsh—so cruel harsh,
That by his conduct would no one know him.
Do changes such as these come over one,
Save when some great affliction of the mind
Or body out-turns the sound and healthy man?

Hinch. You have observed such changes in him, madam!
'Tis most passing strange they have escaped me.
But in his every mood I'll note him,
And if within my little power it lies
To help him, most willingly I'll do it.

Cath. Then on you rest the blessings of a wife,
Who loves her husband next unto her God.

[*Exit Catherine.*

Hinch. Ignorant! Ignorant! Why, gods, there was
In her few, simple questions more learning
Than in the ranting cant of a whole school
Of medicine! As for her ugliness,
It is a film grown over Edmund's eye;
But that's all one to me—I need money—
Fixed and confirmed are my suspicions now.
O, vain, conceited, and ambitious man!

[*Exit Hinchman.*

Enter MALONE *and* GLASCOE.

Mal. All my suspicions I can not tell you now, for that they might be illy founded, and thus I do her an unconscious wrong; and yet I have them, sir, and fear me they are but too strongly grounded. O, sir, you know how such a thing as this harrows my very soul!

Glas. Standing as you do upon suspicious, quaking ground, I have a keen appreciation of your feelings. Well, sir, 'tis a sorrowful reflection that the world is not all good. And yet 'tis but too true, too true. At present, observe her closely. Let no suspicion of your suspicions reach her ears, and finally, keep me informed.

Mal. Heavily as such a charge bears down upon me I will perform it as becomes a man. Your carriage waits you at the door. Good-bye—pardon my lack of hospitality. [*Exit Malone.*

Enter HINCHMAN *as* GLASCOE *approaches the door.*

Hinch. And are the deeds all drawn?

Glas. M' yes, the business is attended to.

Hinch. The business? Then was there something more than merely drawing deeds?

Glas. Sir, the first duty of a lawyer is to keep inviolable the secrets of his client.

Hinch. Ah! my dear sir, your ethics are most unimpeachable, and yet I chance to know—

Glas. Know what, sir?

Hinch. Why, nothing, Judge—and yet I do know this: that in the infinite labyrinth of a lawyer's business there is that which in ordinary parlance is sometimes called—*divorce.*

Glas. What!

Hinch. Hist! Not a word of it. Long years ago we knew each other. Times, not you and I, have changed! There's money in this for us both.

Glas. Your hand, my honest sir!

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Hortens Technor's parlors in San Francisco.*

Enter MALONE.

Mal. It is a very ocean of a world,
A raging and tempestuous sea of life.
Yet, lighter than a gull these waves my bark
Would float, were it not lashed and chained to such
A log. Thus am I anchored and held down
In the mad water's furious trough,
And the ambitious billows clashing me,
Will sink me if I be not soon unloosed;
While mine own ambition plunging about,
Like unstayed ballast in a surging vessel,
Will burst that holds it and thus all go down.

Enter HORTENS TECHNOR.

O, how thy sight doth raise me, sweetest Hortens!
With such a woman as thou art, for wife,
A man might walk the whitest ray of light,
Or dance upon the rainbow's treacherous form.
Oh, Hortens! o'er all I came to see you first.

Hortens. And thereby you have greatly honored me.

Mal. Honored you! No, 'tis I by you am honored,
Lest it be true that the blind man's visit
Honors the surgeon who re-gives him sight;
For, Hortens, since these eyes beheld you last,
They have but looked on night—black, gloomy night.

Horts. Ah! Then I would I might have been that night.

Mal. Then had it been the brightest night for me

That ever was; and were that other day,
With a whole universe of suns to light her
Even as night, far would you outshine her.
Horts. I thank you, Edmund. Yet were her dullness
Better than her falseness—dullness being
Nature's curse; falseness, the work of art.
Mal. Truly, dearest Hortens, stupidity
We can forgive—even though disgusting;
But alas! he is a nobler man than I,
Who can let baseness such as this, which would
A universe of purity befoul,
Go free, unwhipped of justice; no, not I!
Horts. Ill would I blame you, Edmund, if I could.
I would not, for I love you far too well.
I could not, for honest wifely virtue
Is a crystal gem illumining her soul—
A very diamond of the rarest hue,
In the pure forehead of her honor placed,
Alone by which her fairy form is seen,
Which lights her eye and beautifies her face,
And taken away, doth leave her but a mass,
Black and ill-shapen; no, I blame you not
That you should seek a separation from her,
Since she has that pure essence flung away
Which made her wife to you! Rather, I pray,
Our happy union following that event,
Hasten it with all reasonable dispatch.
Mal. The wind when lashed into a hurricane,
Before it carrying all, speeds slower
Than does my desire to end the present,
And begin that fond new life long wished for,
Where we two in love's harmonious embrace,
With fortune ready made, fame within reach,
And happiness all overspreading us—
Hortens, look upon me; see I am still young,
There's not one line of gray yet shames the black—
Why, darling, what is it? Why shrink you back?
Have I this instant changed to some huge monster?
Horts. Oh, Edmund! it is not I do not love you,
But there is something tells me I ought not,
Until the separation from your wife
Is made complete, to see you. Am I wrong?

Mal. And could you shut me out in darkness?
Horts. My reputation, Edmund, think of that!
For when a woman's reputation 's questioned,
For all the world it had as well been gone.
Nor is the foul miasma of a swamp
More deadly poisonous to the body,
Than is suspicion to a good woman's character.
Mal. What care we,
Dearest Hortens, for what the world may think?
Are we two not a world within ourselves?
A very universe, in all its parts
Complete? Has the world ought of good but we have?
Can it love, respect you more than I do?
Horts. Nay, nor one-half so much; thus answer all.
O, I had rather have your love, esteem,
Than that of all the world—ten times as much!
Mal. The one you now have, and Edmund shall be
Your reputation's armed protection
Against the other's loss. Now, Hortens, dear,
I must to some business of importance see,
Which being done I shall return. Till then
A short good-bye.
Horts. You will not be gone long?
Mal. The very smallest minute possible.
Horts. Oh! Edmund, do I do wrong to love you?
Mal. Yes, Hortens.
Horts. Ah!
Mal. As angels sin, do you.

[*Exeunt Hortens and Malone.*

SCENE II.—*A room in Malone's country place.*

Enter CATHERINE.

Cath. Woe is my heart! how changed are all things now!
Then were we poor, but not this misery;
Then was I not a wife without a husband.
Now, alack! there is no thing of luxury here,
But is a dagger pricking at my heart.
Cold, cold as the very marble mantels
Is every one; and he, my husband,

Who for five and twenty years I've followed
As a dog his master—watched through sickness,
And with these hands have often made the bread
That fed us all. But that's nothing, Catherine;
That was thy wifely duty. O, Edmund,
Hast thou forgotten me, thy loving wife?
Hast thou forgotten thy life, but past?
Nor would I care for that if only thou
Wouldst to me be a little as was thy wont.
Alone, alone, all, all alone am I,
And not one soul to help me bear all this.
No, no! I will, e'er long, not be alone.
To-day my noble-hearted boys and girls
Come home, for it is their school vacation.
O, what a joy awaits me when they come!
But they must never know this—no, never;
Not even though this sorrow breaks my heart.
Rather would I die than have my children know
Their father does not treat their mother well.

Enter HINCHMAN.

O, Doctor! till I have shamed the woman,
Have I asked this question of thee: Hast thou,
In thy learned observations, yet uncovered
The reason of my husband's actions?

Hinch. Dear madam, I implore you, have no fear
To come to him who is your steadfast friend,
Most humble and obedient servant.
Unwillingly, I confess, I have seen,
Upon your husband's part, much curious conduct,
Yet that the motives and the cause of acts
Deep in the individual often lie
Beyond the scrutiny of human eyes,
I did make observation years ago.

Cath. But has he not let fall some little word,
From which thy knowledge of the human mind,
So deep and comprehensive over all,
Could make out a cause for his strange actions
To me?

Hinch. Madam, your husband is discreet,
And knowing well my friendship, oft spoken

For his wife, he would be slow to do or say
Aught, in my presence, that would cast reproach
On you.
Cath. Reproach, sayst thou, Doctor? Alas!
I am so ignorant of any cause
Why he should cast reproach on me.
Hinch. And I.
Yet, sometimes, people, from very lack of cause,
Do the most make reproach.
Cath. I can not think
He means me harm.
Hinch. Yet might one ill suppose
That by such treatment he should mean you good,
For no two stars are greater distanced
Than meaning good and acting bad.
Cath. Alack!
Poor Catherine, what wilt thou do?
Hinch. Good lady,
If I may be the humble instrument
Of your advisement—
Cath. Aye, be thou so, my friend—
For that thou art my friend, thy honest face,
And all thy acts toward me, cry aloud.
Hinch. Then would I say, my dearest madam—
And from the deep sincerity of my heart
It comes—to all his jeers, his scoffs, and taunts,
His gross unkindness, and all other acts
Unhusband-like, return you naught but love,
And the most patient and long-suffering
Endurance of your wrongs. Thus will his heart,
Being but made of flesh, quickly melt down
Before your gentle, pleading methods.
Cath. I thank thee, friend, and will, with all the means
Within my power, employ no weapon
Of harsher use than that thou hast advised.
And thou wilt still seek out the cause, for I
So greatly fear me I have done some wrong,
Most grievous in its nature, to my husband,
Which being known, my love will quick suggest
A remedy curing these evil ways. [*Exit Catherine.*
Hinch. Thus doth the devil make good use of saints!
For all the homely love she can pour on him,

Is so much fuel to his burning hatred.
Still am I slow to take the devil's part,
And were I differently situated,
I would not do't. But for the means of life,
Which make a man sleep sound—give him a sure
And well-provided stomach; from his mind
Banishing all thoughts of pauper's ending,
And over all, the time one likes affording
To follow his chosen avocation—
What should a man not do? 'Tis not that *I*
Love money for the sake of hoarding it—
To be a miser is to damn one's own
Existence—nothing more; nor love I wealth
To make an idle and wanton spendthrift
Of my declining days; nor yet to flaunt
A gaudy image in a lady's parlor.
To love money for such base purposes
Is beneath my nature; but that I might,
Apart from groveling and grovelers,
And from all disturbing influences
Of the world, and in mine own peaceful ease
The study of philosophy pursue—
Perchance, at last, for its own betterment,
To give unto the world my humble thoughts—
Is the sole limit of my love for wealth.
Now Malone hates his wife, and so he would
Be rid of her, and so he would have me
To help him—deeming himself a villain,
And for the very solace of his mind
He wants a reason for his villainy.
Shadows will do, but I will give him substance,
For in this small, round compass of a brain,
There lives a being that possesses might,
To make a white-robed angel black as night.
I know the story of their lives; how Maurice
Loved the gentle Catherine; how Edmund
Won her; how they have lived together since.
In this fair neighborhood the villain lies.
Here comes Malone, steeped in hypocrisy,
His head deep bowed beneath the mighty weight
Of some huge moral problem.

Enter MALONE.

Mal. I do not know; I have grave doubts of it.
Ah! Hinchman—you here? Pardon my manner,
My mind, unwillingly, is sore distressed.
Hinch. Much does it grieve your friend to see his friend
So much distressed, and as my ears were made
But now unwilling witnesses to your
Lamentation, may I inquire what 'tis
You do not know, seeming so mightily
Your usual good spirits to weigh down?
Mal. That it would not be wrong.
Hinch. What wrong, my friend?
Mal. Do you not know, Doctor? By my conscience,
I have a mighty fear to mention it.
Hinch. Tush! you mean your separation from your wife—
A subject for closed doors but open minds.
Mal. Well, well, perhaps I do. Have you no doubt
Of the moral right of such proceedings?
Hinch. When first these longing eyes rest on that man,
Who can, with truth, inform me what right is,
Then most quickly will I make you answer.
Mal. But is there not some standard or some rule
Of right, infallible, for our guidance?
Hinch. Aye, one which changes with the moon, or each
New edict of the church, or roams about
Following the whims of legislators,
Or spies itself in each fresh custom
Of society, or else, barring all these,
Lives in a caldron of well-boiled reptiles.
Ha! ha! As good as these standards is mine:
What each man thinks is right, is right to him.
Mal. But when the act is done, may there not come
A pricking of the conscience which—
Hinch. Oh! stop you! The silliest attribute,
In which dense ignorance has wrapped up man,
Is that false thing which fools call conscience, ha!
Mal. What, sir; would you say man has no conscience?

Hinch. Not for the world; for little I would run
Afoul of all great men. What might it be?
A pretty thing, making an islander
Lick well his jaws while dining on a good
Fat missionary; a Mohammedan
Feel jolly good while braining a Christian.
Aye, that's not all. Mark you well, with what
Enthusiasm it makes a Christian
Persecute a Jew and uncontented
Makes one Christian boil, burn, rack another.
Oh! good, dear, sweet conscience to satiate
Thy heaven-born appetite, does one man
Possess a score of wives, another none,
One starve himself, another turn a glutton,
One pray to stones, another worship myths!
O, universal conscience I bow to thee!
Mal. But, Hinchman, is there not in solemn marriage,
A something sacredly to be observed,
Which man but interfering with brings down
Dire ruin on himself and family?
Hinch. [*Aside.*] Gods! but that drives me home!
Well, to my work.—
Malone, my friend, why, now, what is this marriage?
A mere relationship between a man
And woman; a mutual agreement
For the present betterment of them each;
A contract of co-partnership between
The different sexes. When no longer
The relationship is pleasant, to be
Terminated; when the co-partnership
Is no longer profitable, to be
Dissolved—and that at the will of either,
And when the agreement is no longer
For the betterment of each—at once void.
Such is the sum and substance of the thing
Which we call marriage, twist it as you may.
Mal. Doctor, we have children; what say you now?
Hinch. [*Aside.*] Ahem! My wits, I need you now if ever.
This: Could I have erred in that I just said,
It is now the most profound of logic.
Would you have your children live in that bedlam—

That hell on earth, made by an unhappy
Man and wife; by their parents' jeers and taunts,
Murder their tender hearing, and hold up
Before their eyes a prostituted love,
A miserable home; and by such sights
To make them hate the names of love and home?
Mal. I love my children as I love my life.
They are the very center of my hopes,
The diamond cluster of my ambitions.
Hinch. Then I pray you, take them from their ruin.
Mal. Think you I could do so?
Hinch. Aye, if you will
In this matter but follow my advice.
Mal. Have you taken thought of any method
By which the—
Hinch. Divorce might be procured?
Mal. Well?
Hinch. I have given some thought to it.
Mal. Well?
Hinch. Did not you tell me that Maurice Sheboin,
Your lady loved before you wedded her?
Mal. Yes; so he did, but is there aught in that?
Hinch. Much! much! More, that ever since your marriage
He has lived with you; followed you about
From place to place for five and twenty years?
Mal. Well, what of that?
Hinch. Do men such things as that for nothing?
Mal. What mean you, Hinchman?
Hinch. Ah! nothing—except—may be—well this—ha!
That Maurice is a curious man, ha! ha!
Mal. How curious? That hollow laugh means something.
Hinch. Why, no, it don't; and yet it is strange
That Maurice should have tracked you, or rather,
Shall I say your—ah! no difference—lived—
Did you not stay in the same house? and eat—
Devilish brotherly—at the same table?
Mal. Why, think you there is anything in that?
Gods! I have no liking for your manners.
Hinch. *Why, think you there is anything in that!*

Were not you frequently away from home,
Sheboin remaining—to protect the house?
Mal. I was away, but had no thought of that.
Hinch. And all this time Sheboin loved your lady!
Mal. Think you so?
Hinch. *Think I so!* Why, Maurice is made of stuff
Which loving a woman, loves forever.
Mal. Is it possible? Do you imagine—
Hinch. My dear sir, when I became a doctor,
Following the example of three thousand years,
I buried my imagination
With my first patient—resurrection not yet.
Mal. Do you think Maurice ever betrayed me?
Hinch. Think! The thought is within shooting distance.
Mal. Do you think so?
Hinch. Looks it not probable?
Mal. The hideous nightmare of the past
Rises before me, and a thousand things
Make me believe her false, and him. Ye gods!
Hinch. 'Tis very well; the argument sounds fair.
Mal. Hinchman, this possibility does smell,
And I tell you, degraded as I seem,
Were I convinced that he and she were false,
I'd tear their cursed hearts out with these hands.
Hinch. O save your wrath!
Mal. Retract your intimations
Or I will take—
Hinch. Are you in earnest?
Mal. Earnest, man! you run a dagger through me
And ask me calmly if I am hurt.
Hinch. Malone, I had no thought that you would take
My sayings seriously, for in good faith,
I do not think your wife has been untrue,
But on this supposition I had thought
To build a good stout structure for divorce.
Mal. Mean you, that you would prove my wife unchaste?
Hinch. My dear sir, I have somewhere heard it said
The law requires some reason for divorce.
Mal. I could never have it that way, Hinchman,
It would wound me in mine immortal self.

Hinch. Immortal fiddlesticks! Malone, I'm tired
Of all this nonsense. Let it be ended
One way or the other, now—yes, right now.
Mal. But, Doctor, is there not some other ground?
Hinch. None, absolutely none, I know of, whereon
The well-filled person of success may lean;
Besides, as to the grounds, what difference,
The object being divorce. You prove it thus
And keep your money, again your children
Will go with you, and still again the public—
No small factor—will be on your side.
Mal. [*Aside.*] My money I keep—that's no small item—
My children—without a valid reason
They would despise me—and then the public,
Without just grounds, it would deride me.
My friend—my good and honest friend—I am
In all these matters governed by your views.
Proceed upon such grounds as may to you
Seem best, acting, I pray you, in strict secrecy.
[*Exit Malone.*

Hinch. The villain knew it all; a hundred times
By looks and little words let fall hinted it
To me; and now, the ripened time arrived,
Made me assume the argument, and he,
Defend himself, as if he were a priest,
Behind the bulwark of morality.
Tush! The villainy of it is too great,
Yet am not I the villain, but Malone,
Yet is not he the villain, but Hinchman.
Well, shall you pay me for it. Not one word
Of your morality but shall cost you
A double eagle. Ha! a thought! a thought!
Quiet, Hinchman! Let daylight in upon't.
Suppose that I, having the divorce procured,
Should marry the widow? Good, very good!
I will think of that too; she likes me—yes—
But she would have no money then. I might
Convince Malone, it is his moral duty
To divide his property with his wife, ha! ha!
Ah! here she comes and while the notion's on me
I will feel her inclination to me.

Enter CATHERINE.

Cath. Was not my husband here, Doctor Hinchman?
Hinch. Aye, dearest madam, but a moment since.
Cath. Know you which way he went?
Hinch. Not far, I think.
Cath. If he would only let me speak to him!
Hinch. Nay, gentle lady, take it not so hard,
I pray you; remember though your husband
May dislike you, there is another one
Esteems you greatly, seeing in Catherine,
Edmund so despises, one o'erflowing
With all the virtues of true womanhood.
Cath. I thank you, Doctor, for all your kindness,
Yet do your words cause me to think Edmund
Has said much more in disrespect of me.
Hinch. Alas! Madam I fear—yet would I say
No more, lest some unfeeling one might think
I had between a wife and husband gone.
Cath. Good sir, your kindly offices to me,
And all your heartfelt sympathy ill-bear
Such construction; and Catherine who has not
That she ought, appreciates your kindness.
Hinch. Ah! dearest lady, when the heart is robbed
Of that without which it is an aching void,
Sweet nature, by her suffering children pained,
Doth seek to fill the chasm with another love.
Seeing your husband come, I will retire.
[*Exit Hinchman.*

Enter MALONE.

Mal. What, again here!
Cath. O, Edmund, but to say
Our children will be home to-day, and beg thee
Save me in their presence from harsh treatment.

Enter RICHARD *to the window.*

Rich. [*Aside.*] Now will I give my parents a surprise.
Mal. Well, have you done?
Cath. O, will not you tell me—

Mal. Still here! I hardly thought you cared so much
For my poor company.
Rich. [*Aside.*] What is't I hear?
Cath. Just one little word, and have I wronged you,
I will go down upon these knees and beg,
Entreat thee thy forgiveness, the humblest
Penitent in all this world of sinners (*kneels*).
Mal. Enough! Enough! Out of my sight, woman!
No, you will not go! Then will I leave you (*going*).
Cath. Please, Edmund, husband for the love I bear
you! [*Exit Malone, followed by Catherine.*

Enter RICHARD.

Richard. Gods, what is this? My father turned a
brute!
Nor was he given to drinking. His mind
Must be deranged to talk thus to his wife.
Ha! They come again, she following, all tears,
And still beseeching him to tell her why.
Unseen, I will their further conduct watch.
[*Richard secretes himself.*

Re-enter MALONE, *followed by* CATHERINE.

Cath. O, husband, hear me!
Mal. No more! No more! I say
I will have nothing more to do with you.
Rich. [*Aside.*] Now, heaven, see those tears. O,
witness, Jove!
They would melt down a monument of stone.
Cath. But why, oh, why? Will you not tell me why?
Mal. Why, why; and so let why your answer be,
Until you ask yourself.
Rich. [*Aside.*] He is turned iron.
Cath. Alas! is this the curse of riches?
Mal. Riches, indeed! Indeed, riches! Begone!
Out of my sight! No? Then I go again,
And as you love yourself, follow me not. [*Exit Malone.*
Cath. Heaven, forgive me any wrong, in weakness,
That I ever did thee, Edmund. Oh, I,
So used, could die, but that I live to see

My children. O, darlings, you will not forget
Your mother, and never will forsake her!

[*Exit Catherine.*

Rich. Are these my eyes? Are these my ears—my senses?
Was that my father? Was that my mother?
These things do but appear to be. The world
Is naught, but in our minds, and that I saw
Only some horrible hallucination.
I am not here, but only think I am;
Or else my father has gone mad, for ne'er
Did gentleness e'er turn to gall like that.
And sooner would this solid world dissolve,
And in a minute melt to nothingness,
Than one so soft in manner, and in speech
So mild, become so hard as adamant.
Oh, unaccountable! I did not see it,
And yet I did. This self-delusion does no good.

Enter SHEBOIN.

Sheboin. Ho, Dick! Home from school? I have myself
Come down for a few days.

Rich. Yes, I am here.

She. *Here,* Richard? Why, this is not your manner.

Rich. What is it? The cause, Maurice, the reason?
I know that you will tell me what it is.

She. I do not like that solemn manner, boy.
Have you seen aught to make you act this way?

Rich. Seen, Maurice—seen! Gods! what have I not seen?
My father, Maurice—your friend, my father?

She. Well, what of him, Richard? Is he not well?

Rich. About him, lately, have you seen nothing strange?
Has he forgot his friends? Attends he,
As was his wont, to business? Or has he—

She. Pardon me, Richard. Concerning that you speak,
I am a stranger. If with your father
You have had some trouble, go and mend it.

[*Exit Sheboin.*

Rich. As a man lost in a mighty forest,
I am bewildered. I—ha! the Doctor!
That solves it—father is sick. I knew it.

Enter HINCHMAN.

Doctor, what affection has my father?
Hinch. Welcome home, Richard! Have you just arrived?
Rich. One moment, but a thousand years ago
If time be measured by events. Tell me,
In heaven's name, what is the matter with him?
Has reason been stolen from him, or has
Some horrible disease attacked his body?
Hinch. Have you seen aught indicative of either?
Rich. I have seen that which would establish both;
Aye, and a thousand times as much; for now,
A moment since, I heard him use such words
To my mother as would put the blush
Of shame upon a hardened criminal.
Hinch. Indeed! Did he accuse her of any wrong?
Rich. No, there it is; for when she begged of him
That he would make her known to any wrong
She might have done him, he but made answer:
"Out of my sight! Away! Begone!"
Hinch. Richard,
I think your father a very honest man.
Rich. Why, so did I.
Hinch. A conscientious man,
And that he would do no one an injustice.
Rich. As such, I always have esteemed my father.
Hinch. One slow to anger; of a gentle heart,
Having forgiveness strong implanted in him.
Rich. Yet why acts he toward my mother so?
Hinch. Perhaps he has some cause.
Rich. What said you, sir?
Hinch. Nothing.
Rich. Aye, but you did, though, about cause.
Hinch. Oh! that he could certainly have no cause.
Rich. Cause! Cause! to treat my mother that way,
And not inform her why? Gods, I think not!
Hinch. I think not, too.

Rich. What mean you, sir, by that?
Hinch. Keep quiet, Richard, and closely observe.
He who sees nothing, sometimes sees the most;
Hear nothing, the better to hear it all.
Keep your ears primed, and keep your tongue silent.
Withal, trust Hinchman as your steadfast friend.
[*Exit Hinchman.*
Rich. O, horrible, that I should find it so!
Without some reason could a man so treat
His wife, the mother of his children? No.
Still did she seem as innocent of cause
As the newest babe. By heavens, had he
Had cause, he would have made some accusation!
I can not see it, and I must abide my time.

Enter CATHERINE.

Cath. O, Richard, thou art come home! No mother
Ever longed to see her son as thine has!
My boy, my boy—my noble-hearted Richard!
Rich. Yes, mother, I am here—here by your side,
Here, with strong arms and ready, willing mind;
And if required, by you to stand and die.
Cath. Why, Richard, of what speakest thou, my son?
Thy voice is such a stranger, thy mother
Hardly knew it; and thy face, once so smooth,
Is by deep furrows and high ridges marred.
Rich. How long has it continued so? Is it
A beast born of to-day, or has he hurled
Indignities upon you since I left,
And was not here to shield you from insult?
Cath. Of whom speakest thou, Richard?
Rich. Of him whom
Once, unthinkingly, I called my father,
And who, for years, has the unmeaning name
Of husband to my mother borne.
Cath. Richard!
Rich. Or shall I call him that unfeeling brute,
Who, but a moment since, with lordly dignity,
Drove hence my mother from his royal presence?
Cath. Son, thou hast forgot that great command-
ment:
Honor thy father—

Rich. When he who bears that name honors his wife,
The son will honor to the father pay.
Mother, I was a witness to his words;
I saw his haughty brow, his sneering lip,
His frantic hand driving you from him. Tell me—
Or say thou hast forgot to love thy son—
In heaven's name, why thus are these things found?

Cath. Nay, son, we must not speak with disrespect
Of thy father; but tell me this, Richard:
Thou wilt not forsake thy mother, wilt thou?

Rich. When first these arms of mine refuse to strike,
This voice to speak for her who gave me birth,
Then let my speech be hushed forever,
And this worthless body be entombed among the worms—
Aye, though both be raised against my father!

Cath. O, Richard! say, not another word
Against thy father; he has done nothing.

Rich. Nothing! Gods, nothing! And would you screen him?
Aye, but you cannot, for I o'erheard him use
Such words to you as would have been his last
Had he another than my father been.

Cath. Son, dost thou not fear the awful vengeance
Of Almighty God upon thee for such
Language?

Rich. Nay, now, undeceive me, mother.
Trust me—with moderation I will act.
See, I am collected now! Am I not calm?
Fear not I will in anywise act rashly.
Now, tell me, why does he so toward you?

Cath. Alas! if heaven knows, it is its secret.
That so he acts is all thy mother knows.
But that I have suspected, I confess;
For only since our wealth was on us cast—
O, heavy load!—has he so turned upon me.
And from that, against a thousand wishes
Of my will, I have concluded, that now
He deems me an unworthy wife for him;
And that he looks upon me as the relic,
Much detested, of his departed state.

Rich. Of such depravity, so monstrous grown,
Think you the human heart is capable?

Cath. Nay, Richard, that name thou must not call it.
It is not thy father, but some power
That reigns without him, does these awful acts,
Which has o'erthrown the sovereign gentleness
That was, in times gone by, his ruling spirit.
Rich. And think you that this foreign potentate,
Of which you speak, is money or some woman?
Cath. Another woman! I could not think that.
That would kill me; nay, son, it is his wealth;
And wilt thou try some soft and gentle means
To win thy father back?
Rich. If such fair means
Will the good end accomplish, mother,
None of a grosser kind I shall employ.
Cath. Well, Richard, if the most gentle pleading
Of his wife and son can make no movement
In your father's passing strange estrangement,
It is no use to try the other way.
And if we fail, then can thy mother die.
When Catherine is no longer worthy
To be Edmund's wife; when the sight of her
But in him raises foul disgust and shame;
When she becomes a stop to his ambitions,
Then does she wish to live no longer.

[*Exit Catherine.*

Rich. Raises disgust—shames him—unworthy! She?
A stop to his ambitions! My mother?
And withal his wife, who, through so many years
Of poverty and hardship, followed him,
His willing slave! Gods! is it possible?—
Now, when the years begin to fall upon her,
To be cast into the street like a shoe
In its owner's service now past service.
She, the mother of his children; his wife;
In sickness who watched; for him denied herself—
To be now treated as not a white man
Treats his dog! Ha! were he not my father,
'Twere better for him that he should not meet me.

[*Exit Richard.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A room in Malone's country-place.*

Enter RICHARD *and* HELEN.

Helen. I can but ill conceive a thing so terrible.
There must, Richard, there must be some mistake.
Richard. Mistake! To know there were, I'd give the world.
I say these eyes were burned by seeing it.
Can I mistake my ears? I swear I heard it.
Hel. Oh, I am glad I did not witness it!
Such awful discord harrows up the sense
As doth inharmony one music-wedded.
Rich. Discord, did you say? Why, sister Helen,
If, all at once, my body had been stripped—
Aye, even to a very nakedness—
Then headlong hurled against a wall of thorns,
And every inch of tender flesh been pierced;
Or had I, from a fairyland, been thrust
Into a well of fierce, up-pointed swords,
Plunged into a furnace of white-heated coals,
Or thrown from highest heaven to lowest hell,
I could not more have suffered than I did.
Hel. And all thy suffering is to me transferred;
No other torment could be great as this.
Rich. Little sister, do you love your brother?—
Not with that flashing love which lovers have,
But with that other deep and lasting kind,
Which holds one's life within the compass of his hand,
In readiness to give the one he loves?
Nay, keep thy protestations yet awhile.
Hast thy love that richer quality than gold—
That sterner quality than iron—
Which on its object makes thee fix thy eyes,
Nor lets thee turn them to the right nor left
For any glittering thing? Now mayst thou,
If thou hast well considered, answer me.
Hel. Richard, that thou shouldst doubt me, hurts me here.
Two brothers have I, yet always wert thou

Helen's favorite, and dwelt so closely
To her very being, that all she was,
Thou hast partaken a part—she looking
To thee, following thy ways, and trying
Thy every doing to imitate.
My life speaks eloquently my worship
Of thee, brother; but wouldst thou try me more,
I'll be thy brother knight, and buckling on
My armor, stand *thus* between thee and all harm.
And if thou fallest first, *so* will I guard
Thy body till my spirit and thine own
Shall mingle there.

Rich. And thou wilt not let gold,
From me divert thy love?

Hel. Nor yet diamonds.

Rich. Not though thy father didst disown thee, girl?
Aye, and turn thee a beggar in the street?
Ha! I see thou waverest already.

Hel. It was not my love for thee that wavered.
How could our father do an act so bad?
Alas! 'twas thinking this weighed down my head.
But I will answer thee: Not though I were
Scourged from these doors!

Rich. Now, when thou speakest so,
Thou art fit to be a knight, and shalt be.
I, too, and our mission be to wrestle,
From our father's tyrant grasp our mother's rights,
Or die; and so I swear it, by heaven
And earth—by all that's good—our mother shall
No longer suffer at the hands of him
Who's called our father. Swear, Helen, if thou
Lovest me, and if thou lovest thy mother.

Hel. And so I do, by all that thou didst swear,
And by the honor of my mother, too.

Rich. Now are we bound together, avengers
Of our outraged and degraded mother.

[*Exeunt Richard and Helen.*

Enter HINCHMAN *and* GLASCOE.

Glas. Yes, indeed, times have greatly changed since then. Ah, Doctor! in those olden days, men had honor.

Hinch. Aye, sir; so they had. A man would challenge you instantly for the lie.

Glas. And you might leave a sack of gold exposed on a shelf as safely as you might now leave it in a bank, which, however, speaks very little for the shelf.

Hinch. You should beg its pardon instantly. Ah, no! Such things as the purchase and sale of courts and legislatures were unheard of in those days; but I suppose, in these bad times, lawyers are compelled to bribe judges and juries occasionally, just to keep on even terms with their fellow-attorneys.

Glas. No, sir; you are wrong. Lawyers never do such things.

Hinch. Indeed! Why, now, I have been much mistaken in your graces; for I have heard that courts and juries are sometimes influenced by other arguments than those falling from the lips of learned advocates; and, in some way or other, I got the idea that you lawyers played a part in this comedy of justice.

Glas. A villainous, beastly presumption, Hinchman! One well calculated to bring my profession into contempt. Think you a man employs his days in study of the law, only to make it a highway to the penitentiary? Pish!

Hinch. Of all the lawyers in this world—and more particularly, of all great lawyers—do I most humbly beg a pardon. My dear Glascoe, attribute my beastly presumption to ignorance, not intention. And now, right honest sir, how is it these things are done, since you confess you do them not yourselves?

Glas. Lawyers are always free from the actual unclean acts, in which particular their souls are quite as white as any ghost that shows itself against the blackness of the night. These corrupt things of which you speak are done by two classes of persons: First, by the client; but if he be troubled with a tender conscience, then, second, by some particular friend of the party to be influenced. See?

Hinch. See! Well, I think I understand. When the lawyer winks, the client buys. Ah, Glascoe! this is a bad, bad world for two such innocents as you and I to be set down in, unprotected. How sorry I am that your

profession throws you in contact with such people. There are so many tricks in your trade that I suppose there is not one chance in a dozen for a shrewd lawyer to lose a case.

Glas. Oh, as to that, there are, betwixt the commencement and termination of a bad suit at law, many stops, appeals and chances not recognized by the codes.

Hinch. Since we are about to enter upon a suit of great importance, it might not go amiss you should acquaint me with these eccentricities of your profession.

Glas. Why, certainly, so I will; and the information may be of value to you in the coming suit. Still, you must know I have learned these things by observation, not experience.

Hinch. Ah!

Glas. First, at the doorway of the suit, lies your pocket appeal to the virtuous judge to quash, or throw the case out of court. Failing in that, your second step is a money application to the witnesses against you. Should they be more than flesh and blood, and point-blank refuse to swear on your side, your third chance is to manufacture witnesses; for you must know that money is a great manufacturer of evidence. Defeat staring you still in the face, your fourth resort is a convenient journey to the country, for the witnesses upon the other side. Fifth effort of your attorney's client is a pocket appeal to the virtuous Sheriff to procure a jury of your inclining. Sixth stop is at the door of honest jurymen, whose opinions upon the proper ending of the case are not unfrequently based by the filthy stuff; and unsuccessful here, your seventh opportunity is a lucre application to the conscientious judge to undo everything that's gone before. Last effort, and, by its nature, topping all, is your appeal to the Court Supreme, where, I have heard, the sack is, at times, a great argument.

Hinch. Beaten here, I would suppose your honest *client's* career ended.

Glas. In the regular line of honest practice, yes. But your shrewd attorney will have so advised his client as, in most cases, to win under any circumstances.

Hinch. Indeed! Lord save your virtuous *client!* How?

Glas. On execution, my dear Hinchman; which

means no more or less than having your client put his property out of his hands in the early stages of the suit.

Hinch. [*Aside.*] O, justice—sweet goddess—how you are played with by your chosen advocates! But, judge, do not these acts squint criminally?

Glas. Most likely, the majority of them, yet only indirectly or obliquely so, for you must not suppose your well-bred client, would march up to your judge, or juryman, and offer him cold twenties. Out on such cold-blooded bribery!

Hinch. Why, now, how little we laymen know of your *client's* ways. How is it done?

Glas. By the sweetest and most delicate circumlocution, that not the prettiest feather of the judicial conscience may be soiled. Thus: Your judge has a mortgage on his homestead, upon which his wife and little ones depend for shelter from the icy blasts of winter, etc., etc., or your juryman's wife has intrusted a certain interest in her watch, given her by her dying mother, etc., etc., to the Shylock grasp of Uncle Isaac. It is meet that your kind-hearted client should stand by and see the sacrifice of the judge's home, or the juryman's wife's watch, when a little money will save them? Certainly not. So out of the kindness of his heart the client offers them money—to redeem their property.

Hinch. Ah! I see—makes them a loan.

Glas. Just so, a mere loan—but one not to be repaid till eternity. Ha! ha! you see? [*Aside.*] I guess he has been sufficiently instructed. But of all this your lawyer knows nothing, unless he has an exceedingly sensitive nose, which no lawyer is presumed to have. But to this case. You are a witness, sir, I believe?

Hinch. Well, not to say a witness just yet, Judge; but I had thought some of being.

Glas. Very well, and you are also in a measure working up the case?

Hinch. Yes, in a measure.

Glas. Well, I will tell you what evidence I want, and you will get it.

Hinch. I will? Oh, yes, I see; you tell me what evidence you want and I make it—find it, I mean. Well, what will you have?

Glas.]*Whisper.*] Strong circumstantial evidence of unchastity.

Hinch. What you mean is that you wish me to find witnesses who will swear—

Glas. Excuse me, sir; a lawyer never cares to go too minutely into such things. You know the character of evidence I expect; I leave it to you to procure it.

[*Exit Glascoe.*

Hinch. Oh, virtuous, sweet, clear-conscienced, villain! Oh, legal villain! Oh, law-protecting villain, fare you-well. So are we all villains in our way. Well, this information is of value—yet, after all, I suppose he is only a representative of a certain class of lawyers.

Enter MALONE.

Malone have you as yet seen Richard?

Mal. No, Doctor, and I have a fear to see him, I confess.

Hinch. He overheard you saying something to your wife.

Mal. What! is it possible?

Hinch. Aye, true sir, but about you keep your wits.
It was an occurrence most unfortunate,
Still do I think it may come out all right.
When I beheld him there was no object
Upon which these eyes had ever rested,
Looked half so pitiful, so woe-begone.

Mal. Poor boy! At any cost we must not lose him.
How looked he, Hinchman? Did he seem frightened?
Was he startled, or angry? How was his face?

Hinch. It wore the image of profoundest grief,
And that I knew the face is oft the dial
Of the mind, I watched it closely and beheld
The inner corners of his eyebrows drawn
To the center of his forehead, which was
Into a hard-ridged triangle pressed,
Such as a mother wears over the grave
Of her darling child; and yet about his mouth
There was a firmness, telling me he could do
Deeds which, at the trying, ordinary mortals quail.

Mal. Now, mark you, Doctor, he hath a nature,
In its nobleness, more godlike than like man.
Under no circumstances must we lose him.
Hinch. But leave you that to me, all will be well,
And when you meet him put you on a face
Of sorrow—a deep and grievous aspect,
Which will purport against you the commission
Of some great wrong. Slowly give utterance
To any accusation 'gainst his mother;
Rather act the part of him who injured,
Locks in the closet of his breast the wrong,
Sooner than lay it on the guilty one,
Silently and painfully enduring all.
Should Richard rant and talk to you of wealth,
Aye, or of ambition, or of aught else,
Lose not your temper, but amidst it all
Maintain a calm, but dignified and injured
Innocence, saying no words which go beyond
The bounds of *Alas! Ah, Richard! You know not!*
And their kindred, making anon deep sighs.
Insinuations such as these which fall
Like toy arrows on a plate of steel,
Will pierce his tender parts more deeply,
Than the iron shafts an outraged father
Might hurl against his most rebellious son.
Look you, here he comes, and with his mother!
No, foolish man, to go now in their face,
Would be conclusive evidence of your guilt.
Stay—remembering you are the injured one.

[*Exit Hinchman.*

Enter CATHERINE *and* RICHARD.

Cath. [*To Richard.*] Now, Richard, only by the gentlest means;
No harshness, either in your words or ways.
My son, for my sake, forget not thyself.
Rich. [*To Catherine.*] Nay, mother, have no fear; I will do right.
Mal. Ah, Richard, you have come home at last,
And greatly have I longed to see this day,
Holding myself through many weary hours
Of waiting, sustained by this good reason:

That coming home you would bring with you,
Much stores of useful learning from the school.
Rich. For all your kindness and solicitude,
I thank you, father, trusting my efforts,
At the university may have been
Some compensation for the untiring zeal
And generosity of one so wishing
The welfare of his family and all.
Mal. Aye, Richard, dearly I love my children,
And there is nothing truer in this world,
Than that comparison between the love
Of the Almighty Father for mankind,
And that a father to his children bears.
Rich. There is an equilateral triangle,
Formed by the union of three affections:
That of the husband and the wife for each;
That of the parent and the child for each;
That of the children for one another.
And when all these three exist together,
Then is the unity of love supreme.
But either side being taken away,
There but remains an empty, shapeless thing.
Mal. True, Richard; the family only is,
When all its parts in unity accord.
Rich. This is the very essence of life,
The keynote to existence, and the thing
For which we live. Thus is the family state,
O'er any other in this world, supreme;
To the individual of more importance,
Than government, than church, than anything—
This sovereignty where each is sovereign.
But mark you, it may be as bright and pure,
As the ether facing the vault of heaven,
Or may be as dismal as the miasma
Which, in the black pall of death, enshrouds a swamp.
As sweetest music it may be harmonious,
Or as grating bars discordant.
Let but the husband or the wife become
Violators of the laws governing
This state, and instantly all is ruin.
Thus do some children with one parent side,
Some with the other—so divide themselves.

Thus does the husband hate the wife, the wife
The husband, the husband the following
Of the wife, and the wife the following
Of the husband; the children the parents
Whom they follow not, and they each other
Who go not together. So do the heavens
A hell become, and pandemonium reigns.

Mal. I assure you, son, it doth please me much
To know that you have so profoundly studied,
In this particular, the world of ethics.

Rich. Why, how sweet it is; how like to heaven;
How God-appointed, this relationship.
Behold it in the stages of its life!
At first a man and woman, young in years,
Upon the very threshold of existence,
Neither with worldly goods, experience, nor aught
Save love and willingness—so join their lives.
Then in their being comes the second period,
When their combined strength wages fierce combat
Against the world's poverty and hardship;
During which time, most like, and, as it were
Springing from their beings, baptized by their
United love, to the world they give new lives.
Third stage arrives, when they have struck the middle
Of their lives, and fortune's slow-creeping form
Has overtaken them. Surrounded now
With all the luxuries of wealth, loving
Each other—by their children idolized—

Cath. O, what a picture to my longing eyes!

Rich. Then comes the last, when children's children
Carry them to their very marriage days,
Making them live their past lives o'er again,
Stripped of all hardships and privations.

Mal. A life of such rare, wondrous happiness,
Maketh eternity begin on earth.

Rich. Aye, so it doth. And now I know you will excuse me; for having been home so short a time, I wish to look about the grounds a little.

[*Exit Richard. He at once returns, and secretes himself behind a screen, but in view of the audience.*]

Cath. Husband! O, Edmund, hear me! Hear thy wife;

The mother of thy children; the woman
God hath given thee, and her who loves thee
Till her heart is broken with its weight of love.
Mal. And dare you still to look me in the face?
Rich. Now, Jove, restrain me!
Cath. O, God, what is it? What is my crime?
Is it that I worship thee, O, Edmund?
Is it that I would give my life for thine?
Is it the plainness of my face? Is it
The poverty of my learning? O, tell me!
And have I e'er but thought a wrong against thee,
In righting it I will give all my life.
Let me upon my knees before thee, husband,
And beg thee tell me of my wrong. O, Edmund,
Put thy hand upon me, and let me know
Thou hast not yet forgotten Catherine.
Mal. And thou canst, even now, do things like these?
Thou—let me go, woman, and begone!
Cath. There is an end, an end, an end, O, Father!
[*Exit Catherine.*

Rich. [*Aside.*] One moment; a little from me let the beast.
A curse that nature put relationship
Between us! I can not—will not—hold myself. [*Comes forward.*]
Art thou a beast?—a very reasonless
And unfeeling brute? Yet rather, I should say,
Art thou not a stone? for even that brute,
Which hath no feeling more than thou, is banished
From the world. Oh, that that blood which tingles
In thy cursed cheek should form a part of me!
For if it did not, no eternal power
Of heaven or hell could stop me take thy life.
Mal. Think what thou sayst! Richard, I am thy father.
Rich I deny it! By the gods, I deny it!
'Tis a lie, and thou art not my father,
Or else thou wouldst be more the husband
Of my mother. 'Tis but a name thou hast
Upon thee fastened to protect thy life.
Mal. Alas! for this I labored all my life

For Richard. Hear me, oh, ye fathers!
To the world's remotest ends, never more
For your children toil—never more love them!
Rich. Aye, there's the curse—the very curse of it—
That any father should so love his son,
And with such rancor hate the mother of that son.
'Tis an act which shames inanimate nature,
And would put a blush upon a stone!
Mal. O, Richard, you know not!
Rich. I know not what?
If that thou meanest by those words to make
An accusation 'gainst my mother, beware!
For thou dost speak before my mother's son.
And that son who would allow the insult
Of his mother, even by his father,
Is a craven coward, and fit for death.
Mal. O, my son! those words had ne'er been spoken
To thy father if—
Rich. If what?—no more.
Thou puttest my mother off with curses,
And me thou thinkest to silence with sighs.
But now, ye highest heavens, bear witness!
While Richard lives, his mother shall not be
Insulted! Think ye I understand you not?
Would you be slow to make it known if you
Had aught against your wife? The noonday sun
More clearly is not seen than I behold
Your villainy, and like a towering devil,
Here it stands: Your speedily acquired wealth
Has made you want to put away your old wife,
For some curled darling of society.
Ha! now you cringe and start—I strike you home.
Aye, even the woman who followed you,
Through poverty and misfortune, for some one
With a fairer face and glibber tongue.
Mal. Unworthy son! Yet I forgive thee all.
Rich. Callst thou me unworthy son, that I defend
My mother? Nor crave I thy forgiveness.
Yet am I still unfinished till I tell thee
Something which, with all thy boasted learning, has,
Mayhap, escaped thee. Thou wouldst have a young
And pretty wife; and hast thou heard that saying:

"Beauty is no deeper than the skin?" Well,
It is so, by heaven! and I will tell thee
How I know it, to which I would thou mightst
Particular attention pay. One day,
At the university, a sheet-wrapped figure
Was thrown down upon a slab of marble.
Drawing aside the concealing shroud, I saw
A face and neck which might have envied Venus—
Such regularity of form and feature
As sculptors seek to take their models from.
But one hour later, a student's hungry knife
Had stripped the skin from off that face and neck,
And now behold it! See those eyes, which once,
Like sparkling diamonds, had lit up the night,
Now bulging out like two disgusting warts;
And that nose, so like a chiseled piece of marble—
Why, sir, a piece of gristle is as pretty.
And those tinted cheeks—aye, and that dimpled chin—
Why, gods! they were naught but ropes of raw meat.
And all those veins, which gave Aurora's color
To the face, lay streaks of clotted gore.
Nay, but those lips, for but one kiss from which
Thou mightest have given half a fortune,
Were drawn back upon the teeth into a grin,
Ghastly as death itself. Dost thou now know
In what great depths the seat of beauty lies?
And wouldst thou of it rather be possessed,
Than that impenetrable honor and virtue
Which not a surgeon's knife can cut away?

Mal. Such treatment, Richard, I have ill deserved.

Rich. Not deserved it—when, for a cause like that,
Thou wouldst turn out thy loving, faithful wife,
And drag thy children through such filthy slums
As a proceeding such as this must make,
And fling thy fair name into the foul stench
Of the public slaughter-house—not deserve it?
And all because you have become a rich man!
Well, thou mayst take thy money into the world,
And make easy purchase of a thousand
Of those private mistresses there thronging,
Who in them, having not virtue enough
To go into the public marts, and there make sale

Of that which they are pleased to call their chastity,
Dispose of it at private bargain
To rich old widowers, slicking the sale
With a thick-plated coating of church form,
To protect them from the shafts of public gossip—
Then for their business dupe their aged husbands.
Like you such, better than the honest virtue
Of my mother? Or has wealth created
Thee anew? Is not thy body from the same earth
Made as hers—in common death to be the same?
Than she hast thou a higher Creator?
Enough! Of one thing know you: I am here—
Else were I not her son—and here shall I,
'Gainst all assaults, even of her husband,
Till I shall be no more, defend my mother.
And press me not too far, or else these hands—

Mal. Richard!—

Rich. Aye, these very hands may not remember
That thou art the father.

Mal. Thou shalt see the day—

Rich. My mother's rights are sacredly observed.

Mal. When, on thy bended knees, thou shalt beg—

Rich. Aye, and implore thy wronged wife's mercy.

Mal. The forgiveness of thy father for this.

Rich. Forgiveness! and adds hypocrisy to crime!

[*Exit Richard.*

Enter HINCHMAN.

Hinch. Marvelously well done—marvelously!
From yonder place, I have observed it all.
Turn an actor, Malone, and play the part
Of Tartuffe; waste not your talents longer.

Mal. Hinchman, I fear me much Richard is gone
Beyond the hope of reclamation. And,
If so—

Hinch. Why, then, it is your fault, not mine.
Have no fear; for, after all, by no means
Am I certain it is not all for the best—
A sort of Providence, you know, my friend.

Mal. How figure you it that way?

Hinch. So, mark you,
The human mind is not unlike a spring—

The harder it is pressed down, the weight
Being removed, the harder will it fly
Back again. Now, Richard is pressed down
By the thought that he who stands before me
Is a villain; but presently he will
Behold you as the injured party. Then,
With all the fierce impetuosity
Of his great nature, will he fly to you.

Mal. Your jerking style imports a labored reason.
I pray it may be so, yet greatly fear.

[*Exit Malone.*

Hinch. He prays it may be so! He prays! He prays!
Why, bless my soul, Malone, you have become
So used to playing the hypocrite's part,
You act it off the stage, even with me.
By Jupiter! there is something, I think,
Of which he makes concealment from me now.

Enter CATHERINE.

Cath. O, sir! my troubles are all raised as high
As mountains, and I know not what to do.
Each day no surer brings the sun, than me
Some fresh afflictions. Richard knows it all;
And but a moment now my other children
Will be here. O, horrible! O, horrible!
A thought which might bring misery to the damned
Is preying on my troubled soul—killing me.
O, Doctor! could my children think their mother
Has committed any crime—that awful crime?
O, horrors! What shall I do? What shall I do?

Hinch. My dearest lady, keep thee a good heart.
Let not the thought thy children would suspect—
Ah! save me, madam—faced by such purity,
I can not say it; nor does another dare,
In presence of thy friend, make intimations
Of such outrageous things.

Cath. O, Doctor,
How much of kindness thou has always shown me!

Hinch. Good, troubled lady, all that little
Ingenuity of which I am possessed
Has been exerted in your dear behalf.

And, yet, I am compelled to own, the cause
Of all your husband's wretched treatment of you,
Is veiled in death and sphynx-like mystery.
Cath. Alas! if I could only know the cause.
But nothing will he say to me save when,
With dagger words, he drives me from his sight,
As if I had committed some great crime,
Too heinous to mention. If only he
Would make some charge against me, accuse me
Of forgetfulness of wifely duty;
Say that I failed to have his house kept right;
Or that his food ill-suited him. All that
I could bear willingly, for but I knew it,
How quickly would I right it! But to be made
The settled object of his proud disdain,
To but disgust him—I—this breaks my heart—
And not one word from him to tell me why.
Hinch. Ah! madam, it has pleased wise Providence,
To make me stand by many a woeful scene—
Of dying children from their mothers parted,
Of husbands, by the cruel hand, from young wives
Torn apart, and aged much-loved parents,
By offspring, in deep sorrow, all surrounded,
All, all, pass o'er that dark and gloomy river:
And I have seen such floods of tears poured out,
As turned the fountains of my own soul weeping,
And heard such sighs as harrowed up my heart,
But now I hear of thy wrongs Catherine,
They have within my tender breast discovered
A new or unknown source of mighty sorrow.
Alas! I am so all unused to such
Occurrences I have no power to think of them.
Cath. O, good, kind soul, my tongue has not the power
My heart would have it, to return you thanks.
Richard has failed, and unavailing has been
All your kindly efforts. Where can I go
For more assistance in my deep troubles?
Hinch. In all my feeble efforts in your services
I have bethought me of a man, who has
For many a year a close companion
Of your husband been; and ever have I thought

If unto anyone he loaned his confidence
It must have been to Maurice Sheboin.
Cath. I, too, have often thought of Maurice,
But have so much dislike to have him know
There was between myself and Edmund, trouble.
Hinch. Madam, your tender feelings on that subject
Are most commendable; and yet, I think,
So much might be the good of such a course,
It were good reason to allay your scruples.
Cath. I think it ill becomes that modesty
A wife should have, to talk of such matters
To another than her husband. Had you
Not been his doctor, and I had a hope
He had some ailment and you might have cured him,
I should not so have spoken unto you.
Hinch. Modesty and all her lovely sisterhood,
Good madam, live in the mind, intention
Being their very gist, substance and all.
And when the human heart is free from guilt,
The outward forms and showy ceremonies
Of the body, are naught but empty shells!
But when the mind is soiled by evil thought,
Then, no invented style or etiquette
Can purify the act; and what without
A cause is gross indecency, becomes,
When with a reason coupled, sweetest modesty,
Wherefore, with an honest heart, have no fear
Of going to your husband's friend, where being,
Your whole case lay before him, from the first.
Cath. Knowing I mean but good, I will see Maurice.
Hinch. And were I you, I would do so at once.
Where will you meet Sheboin?
Cath. Why in this room,
The parlor, sitting-room or any place.
Hinch. Not so, madam; for your own sake, not so;
For in this it were best you should observe
The strictest and most guarded secrecy,
And for this reason: Should your husband know
You had intention to inquire his meaning,
Such knowledge might but further incense him;
Therefore, your object being to do good,
So do it that it may bring no evil.

Cath. By you I will be ruled, kind friend. What place
Would you suggest we meet?
Hinch. Now let me see—
Had I but had a little time to think—
Oh! yes, meet Maurice near the flower-house,
The one about the center of the park,
This evening, and after dark.
Cath. After dark?
No, no, not after dark.
Hinch. It were better so,
Or else, at least, no earlier than dusk.
Cath. Yes, have it so; at dusk, not after dark.

Enter CARROLL *and* CHARLOTTE.

Cath. My children!
Carr. and Charl. Mother!
Hinch. [*Aside.*] The devil is master of ceremonies.
All things are ready, let the ball begin.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Malone's country place. A park with a conservatory by which Sheboin and Catherine are standing. Evening.*

She. Catherine, you say he drives you from him?
Cath. I am bowed down in shame at saying so.
She. And uses violent language to you?
Cath. Alas! Fain would I tell you that he does not.
She. And will not give a reason for such conduct?
Cath. Not a word will he.
She. Of all the actions
Of which I ever heard, his are the strangest.

Enter at a distance HINCHMAN *and* CARROLL. SHEBOIN *and* CATHERINE *continue their conversation in a low tone.*

Carr. O, yes, Doctor, at the university,

They taught the philosophy of Descartes,
But—

[*Hinchman jumps quickly in front of Carroll, and between where he is standing and Sheboin and Catherine.*]

Hinch. See, Carroll! how beautiful the view,
Yonder in the gloom of gathering night.

[*Pointing in the opposite direction from Sheboin and Catherine.*]

Carr. Why, Doctor, why jumped you so before me?
What was it so startled you?
Hinch. Startled me?
Carr. Startled you, aye, startled you; and even now
Your actions are as frightened as a deer's.
I would have thought some poisonous adder
Stung you, so quickly did you jump; and what
Purports your conduct now? Saw you anything?
Hinch. Nothing; 'twas but your imagination.
Look, Carroll, see with what surpassing beauty
Hangs that cloud upon—
Carr. Hinchman, do you see those people yonder?
Is the park become a lover's hiding-place?
Hinch. Lovers, Carroll! Nay, do not so watch them,
They are but some strollers wandered this way.
Carr. Strollers, say you? Why, that's like my mother,
Else am I blind; and is that not Sheboin?
Hinch. Sheboin!—your mother—look what you say boy!
Think you they would be here at such a time?
Methinks your mother's virtue is too strong.
Carr. I see but illy, and yet it must be.
Hinch. No, Carroll, your mother would not—could not—
Come, come, look on no more—let us go back.
Carr. Nay, tug not so, I would see who they are.
Hinch. See no more; the air is chilly, Carroll,
And your father waits your coming in the house;
Let us go back; this thing you see is naught,
Your mother has not so lost her virtue—
'Tis but your fancy, nothing, nothing, else.

Carr. Nothing! Gods, nothing! Let go me, Hinchman.
See, it is they—my mother and Sheboin!
Hinch. Go back! go back!
Carr. Go back—to hell, go back. Your go-backs mean
Much more than mere go-backs. I will not go.
Hinchman tell me, is this a common thing?
Hinch. Tut! Carroll, talk not so; she is your—
Take you me to be the retail merchant
Of all the gossip in the neighborhood?
Carr. Answer me; have you seen this thing before?
Hinch. It is not for me to say; nor will I.
I had rather be a snake and half my life
Live coiled up dead, than be the trumpeter
Of every bastard rumor to which
The pregnant air gives birth. I will not say.
Carr. You shall or I will force it out of you.
Tell me, sir; is this the first? Speak, Hinchman!
Hinch. I will not.
Carr. Yes, by the heavens you shall.
O, I will twist it from your silent tongue!
Hinch. For shame, Carroll! Such treatment for a friend!
Since you would stay, I could not help you look
On yonder sight, but—
Carr. Oh, my soul, look now!
See her entreating him with outstretched arms.
Oh, would I had been born without these eyes!
Their voices rise. Hold! Listen!
Cath. O, Maurice,
Can it be possible, another woman!
Carr. Hear, she upbraids him for another woman.
Peace my soul, I cannot hear his answer.
Cath. And has it come to this? Oh, no Maurice,
I can not, can not think it! Say it not!
O, God, that man could be so cruel. Oh!
This breaks the last cord of my weary heart.

[*Catherine swoons, and as she falls, Sheboin jumps forward, catches her in his arms, and takes her into the conservatory.*]

Carr. Death! Death! Loose me, Hinchman.
Hinch. You shall not go.
Carr. Not go? Ha! Out of my way! Stop me now! Stop me when she—O, God—away from me!
Hinch. O, man, wouldst thou thine eyes consume by seeing—
Carr. Hell, yes; and its horde of millions devils.
Hinch. I stand between thee and a sight so monstrous.
Carr. Who stops me, dies!
Hinch. So will I die for thee—
To save thee from a view of such disgrace.
[*They struggle.*
Carroll, she is your mother, and there is
For thee another and a better way.
Carr. Aye, thou art right; it would but sear my eyes
To look on such a sight. Oh, gentle friend,
Who would have shielded me from this dire scene,
Forgive me, for I knew not what I did.
Hinch. Nay, think you not of me; it may not yet
Have come to—
Carr. Chaos, chaos, Hinchman,
To that, and desolation—ruin—hell.
Hinch. Think you not so. What we have seen may be
But the appearance of unchastity.
And 'tis proverbial how deceitful
Are appearances. These eyes of ours may,
In the approaching darkness, see it but
Indistinctly; and to say your mother
Is guilty, when she but seems to be so,
Is to wrong her, wrong your father and wrong
Yourself, andwhat a crime that such a charge
As that of gross unchastity should be,
Upon a woman laid, and mark you, sir,
She your before-thought virtuous mother.
Carr. Oh, kinder friend to me than any father,
You would with seeming gloss this foulness over,
And I humbly thank you. I am no more;
But that these threads may for a little time,
Spiting the spirit, hold themselves together,
And for me do one sacred office more.
Hinch. Ah, Carroll, your judgment is too quickly drawn.

'Twere better that this go no further, but,
If you would arrive at some conclusion,
Touching your mother's guilt or innocence,
Leave it to time—await developments.

Carr. Await the development of ruin?
Gods, what a thing this body is when virtue's
Taken from it—a mass of rotten flesh—
No more. Alas! my poor father. Doctor,
Knows my father aught of this villainy?

Hinch. I know not, Carroll, but that he hath
Suspected something of it I believe.

Carr. Upon me now a double burden's laid;
To lay it down, and then lay down my life.
Oh, what a load for son to take to father!

[*Exit Hinchman and Carroll.*

Re-enter CATHERINE *and* SHEBOIN.

Cath. I know I never did a wrong to Edmund,
Nay, nor so much as ever thought him wrong.
For with my whole soul have I always loved him,
And ne'er a day but of him I have thought,
And for him raised my prayers to heaven.

She. Catherine, you shall, at least, be made aware
Why he so treats you. It is possible,
He has by some designing one, been duped.
But if his acts, which now appear so dark,
From motives unworthy of your husband spring,
He shall to you a quick accounting make,
Or Maurice has forgot the name of Catherine.

Cath. Good Maurice, Catherine thanks you from her heart,
But keep in your remembrance, noble friend,
That all I ask is his return to me,
Which done, let the whole past be buried deep.

SCENE II.—*A room in Malone's country house.*

Enter CARROLL.

Carr. I do believe it, and yet I do not.
If it were possible, it were so; but,
Being impossible, it cannot be.

Nature doth not so rip herself apart,
And cast her precious vitals to the dogs.
The veriest glutton feeds not on himself;
And yet I heard her voice talk love to him,
And saw her body in the foul meshes
Of his lascivious embrace wrapped up.
Oh, my immortal soul, what suffering!
Could these eyes see more, and keep their sockets?
Yet could she do it, and lose her children,
And lose her husband, and lose her honor,
And her hope of heaven, which all so strong,
Were in her spirit bedded? It stands not
To reason. Yet the logic of the eye
Outweighs, disproves the logic of the mind.
I think it can not, that it ought not, be;
But that I see, I know. Gods! can I thus
Calmly reason while my soul is burning?
I would be just, yet would I kill the world.
But, oh, my father! how my heart for thee
Doth bleed!—thou, who hast labored all thy life
To make a home for thy declining days,
To find thy wife unfaithful to thee, and
Thy house a den of infamy! Oh! Oh!

Enter MALONE.

Mal. You desired to see me, son?
Carr. Yes, father.
Mal. Why, Carroll; you are pale, trembling, sick.
Carr. To death, father, of a dread disease
That knows no remedy; that makes all men
A toy for death, and doctors but a thing
For sport. In my most vital part I'm stabbed.
Mal. Carroll, you are overwrought by study,
And your unsettled mind slept not last night.
Carr. Slept! Slept! Gods, sir! I saw a sight last night
That would have roused one from the eternal sleep
Of death, and made him sleep no more forever.
Oh, would, my father, that this mind, which now,
So like a worn-out garment stripped in shreds,
You see, had had its cause in overwork.
Last night I had a sight of hell!

Mal. Carroll,
Your words and looks strike terror to my soul.
Calm yourself, son, if you would speak to me.
Carr. Calm! Calm! Am I not so? Look at these hands.
Do they tremble? Is not my eye steady?
Calm, sir! Why, I am as calm as a dead
Ocean. Are you ready now to hear me?
Mal. Aye, son; if aught you have to say, say on;
And yet I see your manner speaks but ill.
Carr. If one who dearly loves his country
Should discover traitors undermining it,
Ought he not make known his knowledge?
Mal. He should.
O, Carroll, how you have relieved my breath!
Carr. If one should know his friend's wife had betrayed
Her husband, would it be a friendly act
To tell him of her infidelity?
Mal. Conduct of such heroic mien I call
The supremest act—the very acme—
Of friendship, pure, sublime. But why these questions?
Carroll, I fear they do import no good.
Carr. Anon, they will explain themselves. One more:
If a son should know that his father's wife
Had been untrue to him, what think you now?
Would it be the part of filial duty
To keep the secret locked up in his breast,
Making his being putrid with its foulness?
Mal. Carroll, your arrow shoots me through the heart.
You make my blood stand still. Oh, say no more!
I know too well the meaning of your words.
Thy mother, Carroll, Carroll—thy mother!
Carr. O, father! I have seen that makes a son
Forget he has a mother, and curse her.
Mal. Tell me no more; I am not made of iron;
And yet I will be brave—my heart be stone.
Now pour it forth, even to the sentence
Of the damned. What saw you, that you so speak?

Carr. Thy wife—by which cursed cause, my mother—
Wrapped in the amorous hugging of one
Whom thou didst vainly think thy dearest friend.
Mal. What say you—wrapped in his lascivious arms?
And has it gone so far as that—Maurice?
Carr. Aye, and I heard her beg for her dishonor,
As a sucking babe cries for its mother's breast;
And then—my God!—I saw him pack her off
To a hidden place, that even the stars
Might not behold such infidelity,
And, shaming, cease to shine upon the night.
Mal. Hold, Carroll—hold! Spare me the awful sight,
If such you saw. Yet you did not see it;
Your senses have deceived you; whom you saw
Was not thy mother—not my wife. Oh, no!
Such perfidy is inhuman, and goes
Beyond the bounds of earth, and enters hell.
None but the damned—the everlasting damned—
Could do such acts of monumental baseness.
Carr. I swear, these eyes which now see you, saw them as plain.
Mal. Oh, no—not that! I have seen much—
Enough to melt this softer heart than flesh
Into an iron casting, but not, not
Thy mother's actual unchastity—
The open, loose and bawdy thing itself!
O, leave me, Carroll, and let me alone
Hold up this awful sorrow. Yet art thou
Deceived, my son.
Carr. In highest heaven's name,
And for the good and virtue of the world;
For your sake, and for her own; for woman's,
And for your children's, I pray I am deceived;
And yet—
Mal. Nay, do not say it, Carroll.
If it be true, it is not of to-day;
Nor has the foul disease yet run its course.
Unchastity is a sore that never cures,
And proof most positive should be our guide
In any accusation of so grave a kind.
Carr. From your abiding spirit will I be
Advised, holding this dagger in my heart

Till time and your good wishes shall have plucked it forth. [*Exit Carroll.*

Mal. O, Hortens! for thy love I do it all!
For thee I am a traitor to my wife;
For thee do I betray my children thus,
And act the hypocrite to every one;
And yet Carroll said things I did not like—
In Maurice's arms, at night, and from the house.
There's villainy in that! He might have planned
To have them meet, but amorous hugging
Is a voluntary act. Suspicion,
Like a sly tiger, creeps down upon me
That what I would have, in appearance had,
Is come to light as gross reality.
Hinchman has played me false, and all this time
Has been the means for their accursed ends.
I'll find him out, and wrench this business from him.
[*Going.*]
Here comes the traitorous creature now.

Enter HINCHMAN.

Have you played me false? Are you a villain?
Hinch. Ha! ha! Villain? Why, if you think I am,
Then to you I am; if you think I am not,
Then to you I am not; for nobody
Is a villain, nor a liar, nor a thief,
Nor a murderer, except as some one
Thinks him to be such. The reason is plain.
Mal. O, you could *reason* a man into hell.
Hinch. Aye, most men, without trouble. But, trust me,
I could never reason them out again.
What ails you, sir?
Mal. Is my wife false to me?
Hinch. Why, sir, unless you have escaped the rule
Of a general average, yes; if so,
No. Plainly, I suppose so, that being
As you desired it.
Mal. You lie, you villain.
Hinch. First, you ask me if I am a villain,

Now you answer yes, and add me liar.
First, you hire me to prove your wife untrue—
When I do 't, you pay me off in curses.
Mal. Enough! How came my wife in Maurice's arms?
Hinch. Now, just between your holiness and myself,
That self-same action somewhat puzzleth me.
I guess she has succeeded in fulfilling
Your desire—as 'twere given you cause, you know.
Mal. O, you gross traitor, you have betrayed me!
And since I knew you, have been but the means
For the accomplishment of this evil end.
Hinch. Ha! ha! O, what a joke!
Mal. Hinchman, I will—
Hinch. Make a fool of yourself—let me end it,
And change all our hard work into a farce.
From what you say, I would suppose Carroll
Has told you what he saw last night. Well, well,
Now let me tell you what I saw; for know you,
Hinchman kept his head, while Carroll lost his.
And that which Carroll's flaming fancy saw
As the lascivious, beastly hugging
Of two amorous lovers, I beheld,
In plain language, as a woman fainting.
Maurice, near by, not wishing her to fall,
Caught her in his arms; and as there was
No seat at hand, with gentlest kindness,
He led her to the conservatory,
That she might there regain her wonted strength.
Mal. O, I am glad it was not otherwise!
Hinch. Well, so I think it was.
Mal. You think it was?
Why, you know it.
Hinch. Well, I think I know it.
Mal. Hinchman, there is no difference between
"I think it," and "I think I know it"—since
Thinking makes you know. You do not doubt it?
Hinch. No—that is, not to speak of.
Mal. Stop, Hinchman!
Tell me you know Catherine's honest.
Hinch. Ha! ha! Well, then, as near as eye can see,
And mind can reason, she is as virtuous

As any woman. Now, I pray you, leave me;
For at this hour she meets me here, on matters
Further relating to our worthy cause.
Mal. Have you not all the evidence you need?
Hinch. Why, mark you, sir, how little you know of law.
Think you a court of justice sits to judge
With its imagination? No, no, sir.
Judicial proceedings involve the man
In his reasoning department, passion,
Fancy and figures being foreigners
To them. Besides, a cold-blooded lawyer
Would make mince meat of all such evidence.
So, since we take our cause to court, we must
The court convince; and what would, to your children,
Be conclusive, would but make an old judge—
Used to the foibles of the world—dismiss
Your case, and call the cause that follows it.
Mal. Well, Hinchman, let it all be ended soon;
For weighty matters hinge on its completion.
And mark you, sir; carry it not too far.

[*Exit Malone.*

Hinch. A strange old villain that you are, Malone,
To want a separation from your wife,
And yet not want a cause for it; and still
I think it human nature to be so,
Or else Malone must be the most consummate
And outrageous hypocrite I ever saw.
And whether he be honest in his villainy,
Or hypocritical in his virtue,
I know not now, nor never have, nor can.

Enter CATHERINE.

Good morning, Catherine. I hope and trust
Your interview, last evening, with Maurice,
To your advantage terminated.
Cath. As yet, Doctor, I do not know. Maurice—
Good, kind-hearted Maurice—will do for me
What lies within his power, and I pray God
He may find out the cause of Edmund's acts.
Hinch. And have you not since then seen Maurice?

Cath. Nay, but my heart is bursting with impatience.
Hinch. At what time do you expect to see him?
Cath. I know not; heaven grant it may be soon.
Hinch. See him to-night.
Cath. I would I might.
Hinch. Why not?
In a matter of such great importance,
Shall any say you nay? Write him a note,
Asking that he should meet you in the park
This evening, and I will take it to him.
Cath. Ah, Doctor, you have been so kind to me!
My aching heart gives you its greatest thanks. [*Writes.*]
Hinch. Think not of me, dear lady—all my thoughts
And services—though by old age enfeebled,
Are as much at thy command as though thou wert
My sovereign queen, and I thy humble subject.
[*Exit Hinchman, with letter.*

Cath. Now is my fate in the just hands of heaven.
If Maurice's efforts fail, farewell to hope.
[*Exit Catherine.*

Enter CARROLL *as Catherine retires, seeing, but unseen by her.*

Carr. Is it for me to judge and her condemn?
In violation of the great decree,
Shall finite mortal sit in stern judgment
On his fellow? Why, what a thing am I?
But flesh and blood and bone—no more than she,
And shall what is no more its equal, judge?
Pish! Out on such sophistry! Yet, would I
To her be just, nor her condemn unheard,
If aught to justify her act she hath
The breath to say. Justify—an act like that—
Then foulest murder is no longer crime,
But hath approval of divinity.
O, heavens she was—aye, is—my mother.
I can not, can not, bring my mind to think it.

Enter HINCHMAN.

Hinch. [*Aside.*] Wavering! then these be my arguments. (*Holding up letters.*)

[*Carroll turns and as he sees* HINCHMAN, *the latter attempts to conceal the letters in his pocket.*]

Carr. Ha! What have you there, Hinchman?
Hinch. Nothing, sir.
Carr. Nothing? Nothing? Why, Hinchman, should a man
At the concealment of mere nothingness
Make efforts such as these. You have something—
I feel it—about—O, heavens!—about
That woman—give it to me this instant.
Hinch Sir, what I have is not your property,
Nor have I anything that belongs to you.
Carr. It is a lie! You have that there concerns me
In my birth, my life, my honor, my all.
I saw letters but a short moment since,
Which your attempt to hide, convinces me,
I have a right to see, and now produce them.
Hinch. For shame, Carroll!
Carr. No; shame has done its worse.
Yield, or by heaven I'll take them from you.
Hinch. Art thou my sovereign, I thy subject base,
That thou dost dare command me in this way?
If thou dost think so, thou hadst better have
At thy address the means to execute
Thy mandate, ere thou speakest so king-like.
Carr. The means! the means, sir! Dost thou see these hands?
They could grapple with a lion, or o'erturn
A mountain, and think you that they would pause
At such a very pigmy as thou art?
Hinch. Boy, I have the age to be thy father,
And though the white and black are mingled here,
Still do I have an oaken body, which,
When thou wouldst have beheld thy mother's infamy,
Clasped thee within these vice-like arms, and now,
As then I held thee from a sight of hell,
Defy thee that thou dost of me demand.
Carr. Defy me, and with that accursed hour
Fresh in my memory?
Hinch. Aye, that I do,
In mine own right.

Carr. No more; all right is murdered!
[*They struggle.*

Hinch. Oh! oh! I am too old!
Carr. Old man, forgive!
[*Taking letters.*

Hinch. Thou hast o'ercome me and taken the letters,
I know not what they may contain, and 'twas
For thy sake I refused thee sight of them.
Now, on thy own head rest the consequence
Of thy rashest act; Hinchman forgives thee.

Carr. [*Reads.*] "Dear Maurice—Meet me at the summer garden-house this evening at the same hour as last night. Oh, I so want to see you!

CATHERINE."

and this

"I will be there,

MAURICE."

O, sir; I am so bowed beneath this load
Of shame I cannot look you in the face.
O, speak; but ask me not to raise my head.
Doctor, whence came these hellish letters?
Hinch. One from your mother—
Carr. Hated appellation!
Use some other name.
Hinch. Your father's wife—
Carr. Nor that either—O, world of sin!—say she.
Hinch. [*Picking up the letters from the floor.*] Then, she—pure woman!—who did write this one,
Begged me to give it to your father's friend,
And all unknowing that it held such vile
Proposals, I took it to the gentleman.
A certain mood with which he took and read it—
An amorous blush which overspread his face—
As he perused and reperused the letter,
Roused my suspicions, and when he noted not,
I picked it up, intending to consign it
To the flames. This is his answer; the two
Speak for themselves; you know as much as I.

Carr. I am dead, Hinchman; these hands of mine feel not;
This heart beats not; these eyes but see things black.
Good friend sustain me; hold me, or I sink.
Mother!

Hinch. Poor lad, I would have saved thee this.

Carr. Enough! Enough! Am I a puny boy,
A very baby spewing in my nurse's arms?
I am a man—who dares—Let it go on,
I will be there with you to see it all.
Let them but live so long, and after that
Let the world die! O, hell, give me thy power,
Furies be with me, for I shall kill my—
What—who says she is my mother, dies.

[*Exit Carroll followed by Hinchman.*

SCENE III.—*A park and conservatory. Evening.*

Enter a man and a woman.

Man. Its curious how we were sent for from the city so suddenly, to come here. I half believe there's something isn't right.

Woman. Do you know where we are?

Man. Since we left the station in the carriage, I can't tell exactly where we are, but I know about the place.

Enter HINCHMAN.

Hinch. The bawds were to be here at this hour. Let me see; have I the wigs and everything? Yes, all's right. The hundred thousand dollars shall be mine. Ah! there they are. Are you the man and woman who were sent for from the city to see a gentleman here?

Man. We came here by the order of somebody that we don't know Be you the man, and what do you want with us?

Hinch. Yes, I am the man who had you brought here. I want you to help me play a joke, ha! ha! ha! a devilish good joke!

Woman. Ha! ha! ha! a very good joke; but, sir; ha! ha! for the best joke in the world we can't come here for nothing. Your messenger gave me but five dollars which isn't half what we're worth in the city to-night.

Hinch. O, I'll pay you well; see, here's a twenty for you each. All I ask is that you play your part well.

Man. That's good; now what's your joke?

Woman. It must be an awful funny joke for so much money.

Hinch. Ha! ha! Well, you see my dear, I am one of those fellows who never cares for money when he can play a good joke. Now, to tell you what it is. I am here visiting a country friend of mine and have sworn to him that this house is haunted, ha! ha! ha!

Man and Woman. Haunted?

Hinch. Yes, that it has spirits in it you know.

Man. Why, who the devil believes in spirits?

Woman. Well, I'm not so certain.

Hinch. Why, nobody believes in spirits, of course; and that's why I've brought you here to play the joke on my friend. I've told him that I've seen the spirit of a man and woman in here at night, and have laid him a bet that he can see them to-night, too, ha! ha!

Man. Ha! ha! ha! I see we're to be the spirits, ha! ha! ha!

Hinch. Not so loud, please, you might raise the spirits. Now, what I want you to do is to put on these wigs and things, [*they do so,*] and then go into that house. By and by you will see a lady and gentleman pass this way, and following them at some distance will be two gentlemen and myself. When you see me lift up my cane, so, then you woman raise the window and cautiously put your head out and look around, then put the window down; after that sit you on each others' laps and fumble each other over—for so I have told him the spirits do. Should any one try the door, which will be locked, scream and run out the back way; so escape.

Man. Capital joke, ha! ha! excellent joke.

Woman. Very funny.

[*They go in and Hinchman locks the door.*

Hinch. Good joke! a hundred thousand good jokes and every one of them a big round dollar in Hinchman's pocket. [*Exit Hinchman.*

Enter SHEBOIN *and* CATHERINE *followed at some distance by* MALONE, HINCHMAN *and* CARROLL. *The former pass*

round the house by the door—which cannot be seen by CARROLL— *and out of sight; when* HINCHMAN *raises his cane, then the woman lifts the window, puts out her head, looks around and closes the window again.*

Hinch. Wise, wise, so carefully to look before—
Mal. O, heavens, was that not my wife who looked?
Carr. It was not my mother!
Mal. Then, not my wife.
Carr. But one who for five and twenty long years
Has disgraced, dishonored and befouled that name,
Next sacred to the greatest one in heaven.
This day her acts shall reach a period.
Such monumental faithlessness as this,
No longer shall debauch God's footstool.
Hinch. What, Carroll, you would not kill your mother?
Mal. O, no, my son; pity thy poor father,
And help him to bear this awful sorrow.
What is her crime, she is still thy mother.
Carr. She is not my mother! It is a lie!
Who dares say so? But I would not kill her,
Have no fear, I would but see her in the act,
That I might curse her sex from off the earth.
Hinch. This that we see may but appearance be.
Wait you here while I go yonder and observe.
[*Hinchman crosses to window.*

Carr. Silence seal up my tongue; let me not speak
Or that before my time I die.
Mal. O, Carroll,
What is thy anguish by the side of mine?
I am a father, yet a doubtful one,
A husband, yet a dishonored one.
Carr. I ask no measuring of torments,
Only the silence of the grave, and death.
Hinch. [*Raising the window a little so as not to be seen by Carroll.*] Woman, get you over on his lap—you fellow undo her dress at the neck—so, so, that's good—now pinch her cheeks—well, well—cover each other with caresses—now—so—well—keep it up. Should any one try the door scream and run out—remember that.

[*closes window.*] The gathering gloom and Carroll's excitement shall certainly deceive him. [*Beckons Carroll and Malone who pass over. Malone first looks into window—then Carroll.*]

Carr. [*Drawing a dagger and trying door.*]
The end, the end, now for the end! Locked! [*Screams within.*]
Not though you were of solid iron made
Could you resist me. [*Breaks in door.*]

Mal. He will kill them, Hinchman.

Hinch. Have not a fear, that is provided for.

Carr. [*Reappearing.*] Escaped me! No, by the gods, you shall not.
Now Mercury give me thy swiftest speed.
Help furies, help me on!

Mal. Carroll, Carroll—gone!

Hinch. Let him go—they are well on their way.
The noise will soon attract the others here,
As if escaping knowing not where to fly.
Now, summon all thy strength; make every nerve
And muscle do its duty—wear you a face
Of thunder; look fierce as hell; seem outraged,
And strike terror when you speak; so drive them
From your presence as the Almighty did
From Eden expel the first great sinners.

Mal. I am prepared. [*Exit Hinchman.*

Enter CATHERINE *and* SHEBOIN *running.*

Cath. What is it, Maurice?

She. Here! Here!

Cath. My husband!

Mal. Well mayst thou be afrightened woman,
Now, I have found thee in thy very shame.
O, thou infamous, outrageous villain;
Thou cursed traitor to the cause of friendship,
Betrayer of my wife, destroyer base
Of all my peace, my happiness, my home,
Thou hell-born viper, made by the devil
For this especial cause, who all these years
Hast kept thy poisoned fangs within my heart,
Living upon my blood, my honor—

Cath. I am struck dumb; what mean you, Edmund?
Mal. Silence thou wretch, unnameable! Thy time
Ere long will come—meanwhile thou mayest well
Be stricken dumb.
She. Thought I that you were sane,
Those words you just have said would be your last.
Mal. Right! Right! The very thing! the very thing!
Steal first the honor of my wife; then seek
A pretext for the murder of her husband.
Cath. The honor of thy wife? O, Edmund!
Mal. Be still thou hellish bastard breeder.
She. Another word like that, I tear your heart out.
Mal. Another! a million and repeated,
Could not express her vileness. Come tear it out—
What's left of it. Hast thou not taken all
That's worthy of a man! Why leave the flesh,
When thou hast robbed it of its immortal part?
Aye, wring thy hands as thou hast wrung my heart.
She. Mean you Malone, by that which you have said,
I have betrayed the honor of your wife?
Mal. Why, witness highest heaven! was ever
Such deliberate villainy seen before?
This is the very hardened iciness
Of long standing criminality.
Or do you mean to play upon the words?
'Tis no matter whether you say betrayed,
Stolen or robbed, plundered or purchased;
Honor or virtue, chastity or what not.
Thou hast taken that which was neither mine,
Nor hers, nor any one's to give, but was
A gift from heaven, a very loan at birth
To be returned at death—that, without which,
A woman is a bag of rotten flesh—
That which is the immortal part, the soul,
The essence of her existence—thou vulture,
Such as hell is made of, thou hast taken,
And left her there the thing, even you see,
A mass of dung!
She. Enough! Enough! death now.
Cath. Hold you, Maurice; he is still my husband.
She. Am I a man to see thee so outraged,
And by him who should be thy protector?

Cath. Nay, Maurice; to rail insult against me,
Insults me not, nor soils the purity
Of mine honor; for that is a something
Which no amount of saying can take from me.
My fate is yonder and I fear not man.
Mal. So would you—vilest thing—your body make
A shield against my vengeance, and protect
Your lover with it. Indeed 'tis not unfit,
Since you have made one use of it, stop not
To put it to the other. Out of my sight!
You public shames away! nor ne'er again,
By your accursed forms, make dark my presence.
She. For thy sake, Catherine, do I hold my peace.
Cath. Edmund, I have endured your insults;
I have stood your taunts; I have been withered
By your disdain; I have been hurled from your
Disgust—all this and more than tongue can tell,
Have I borne from you, hoping to win you back,
And I as innocent of any cause,
As is the newest babe. It was the wife—
The loving and obedient wife—
Such as my mother taught me how to be—
That bid me do all this. But now thou hast
My chastity impeached, and this shaft pierces
Beyond the wife and strikes the woman,
And 'gainst this last and heinous outrage,
Every atom of the woman in me,
Stands up in fierce rebellion. I leave you,
Though not as one having upon her soul
One spot of infamy, but as pure and chaste
As when thou tookest me to wife. I go,
And going shall demand, if there be justice
In this world, the rights which God has given me.
Mal. Have spoken all your fill? Then you vile thing
Away from me!
She. Can I endure this?
Cath. Make no resentment, for my sake, Maurice.
Edmund, I launch no curses on thee;
But, as she lives, thou shalt from Catherine hear.

[*Exeunt Catherine and Maurice.*

Re-enter HINCHMAN.

Hinch. Well done, Malone; well done—my word for it!

Mal. Leave me, Hinchman! I have done that outrage
To even my manhood makes me shudder.

[*Exit Malone.*

Hinch. Indeed! And still at it, even with me.
Well, thou mayst carry the belt to thy grave,
And no competitor worthy of the find.
Poor woman! Poor woman! It hurts my heart.

[*Exit Hinchman.*

Re-enter CATHERINE *and* SHEBOIN.

She. Nay, Catherine; no more.

Cath. O, Maurice, I can not!
It was the woman only in me spake,
And not the fond wife and loving mother.
Before I go, I must look on my children,
And know that they believe me innocent.
O, God, if they should think me guilty now!
Maurice, I shall go wild—O, awful thought!
But if they do, then I shall live until
By some sweet light from heaven, I am proved
Innocent. O, God! thou wilt not let me die,
And have my children think I am unchaste?

She. Dear Catherine, thy troubled spirits calm.
Thy children will not think thee else than pure;
Their mother is thy children's dearest idol—
Worshiped by them o'er all else on this earth;
And nature's hand to thy safe rescue coming,
Will teach their love their mother's purity.

Cath. O, thank thee, Maurice! thy words are all so kind;
But 'twas a thought that pierced my very soul.
And thou art right—they will not—can not—think
Me gone to shame. This feeling holds me up,
And but for it—ah! I have much yet to do,
And must be strong. Fare-thee-well, Maurice,
Till I see my children—precious darlings.

[*Exit Catherine.*

She. If it be true there is an unseen hand

That guides the destiny of man, how stranger
Than the world itself its movements are!
'Tis these that make me doubt; these snap the cord
Of faith, making the universe an anarchy.
O, Justice, hast thou no part in divinity?

[*Exit Sheboin.*

Re-enter CARROLL.

Carr. They have escaped me, and 'tis well they have.

Re-enter CATHERINE.

Cath. [*Aside.*] I saw him come this way; aye, 'tis Carroll.

Carr. [*Aside.*] My mother? No, not she; aye, even she—
Even she, whose labors gave to me birth.
Oh, God! oh, God! become a harlot!
Even she, who suckled me at her breast.
Now there is virtue killed, since one who has,
From out her body, fed a life, made of it
Uses such as these—Oh, base, base uses!
And, after five and twenty years, to turn—
O, stop my breath, that I speak not the word!
'Tis a curse—a curse of hell—upon me,
That my poor heart can bear this and not burst.
O, highest Judge in heaven! O, oracle
Of hell! O, nature, air, earth, universe!
Listen to my appeal, and make me answer:
Could such a thing as this be possible?
When, from her body, the lascivious
Had, by age been robbed, to turn a lewd!
When at her feet the world's wealth lay, and she,
Stripped of the shabby raiment of necessity,
Which even the veriest bawd can blazon
To the world as an excuse! And after
All this age of virtue. Aye! aye! What is it?
'Tis but the boldness of unchastity—
The ripeness of lost virtue—that I saw.
It has—it has—it has lived before;
This monster serpent was not born to-day—
Till now the shroud of night has been its shield.
And I—I—who am I? Who is my father?

My face, these eyes, this nose, this mouth, these cheeks,
And every lineament, proclaims me bastard!
Oh, God! oh, God! now let me die!

Cath. Carroll!

Carr. Ha! hast thou come back to have me kill thee?
Where is my dagger, and where thy lover?
Ye did escape me but a moment since,
But now, ha! thou must die. Hast said thy prayers?
And is thy soul prepared to meet its Maker?

Cath. My soul has not that sin which makes me fear
To meet my God. I am not guilty, Carroll.

Carr. Not guilty? And hast thou power to say these words,
When, but one moment hence, thou shalt behold
The yawning depths of hell? O, think it, woman,
But one minute more, and thou shalt stand—
Thy sins labeled upon thy naked soul—
Before that Judge who never errs. Canst thou
Then say, "I have committed no adultery?"

Cath. Not though thou hadst power omnipotent,
Could thy words blanch my cheeks, nor send one quiver
Through my body, I am so innocent.

Carr. O, monstrous sin, that could so stand undaunted
In the face of heaven! Now shield my eyes,
Power, furies! O, heavens! where is my strength!
This arm, which, but a moment since, had fought
An army, is now turned traitor to my will.
I can not strike thee, and thy life is saved.

Cath. Thou dost not believe thy mother guilty?
Say it, Carroll—say it, O, my son!

Carr. Son! Son! Woman, darest thou to call me
By that sacred name? Thou didst bear me,
True, true, true; but canst thou name my father?
Ha! Now thou dost cringe. O, that thou couldst,
But for one moment, have this heart put in thee,
That thou mightst learn what suffering is!

Cath. O, kill me, Carroll, with thy steel dagger—
Not with this one of words; I fear not death.

Carr. Avaunt, thou thing! Thy manner doth confess
Thy guilt, had these eyes not been consumed

By seeing it. What more have I with thee
To do?

Cath. To do with thy mother, Carroll?
O, son, dost thou believe that this poor body,
Which gave unto thee birth; which fed thy life,
And watched thee grow from tiniest babyhood;
Which, for so many years, followed thy father
Through sickness and through poverty, could now
Commit so great a crime against thy father,
Against her children and against herself?

Carr. Who could do acts like these, disgrace her husband,
Degrade her children and debase her honor,
Could say this too, and it affects me not.

Cath. O, Carroll, I could have stood the taunting
Of thy father—his hatred, his disdain;
I could have borne the flings the world might cast
Upon me; the smarting slaps from papers;
The cruel gossip; the lies and calumnies;
But to have thee, my son, who speaketh only
From the deep convictions of his honest heart,
Accuse me—his mother, who so loves him
That she would give her life for him—of lack
Of virtue—O, God, this is too much
For one poor heart to bear! Carroll, darling,
Look in my face. Seest thou shame or guilt there?
Do these lips speak to thee lies? Do these eyes
Look to thee lies? Do I so act as one
Whose virtue, honor, chastity are gone?

Carr. Gods! if I had not seen it, I could not
Believe it; but the disgusting act twice seen—
The letters! Get thee gone from me, woman!
I know thee not; thou art not my mother,
And I am a bastard.

Enter Richard *and* Helen.

Cath. O, cruel, cruel son! Can not these tears
Plead with thee, Carroll? Let me upon my knees
Before thee, as thou, a little child, wert wont
To come to me with all thy little troubles,
And beg thee do not think thy mother guilty.

Carr. O, honor, honor! thou art made of iron!
Enough! Enough! My heart is stone—made so
By thee. Thy presence causes me to think
Of naught but death, damnation, hell—away!
Helen. Great heavens, Richard! what is this we hear?
Rich. Carroll, have you lost all your self-respect,
And all respect which you should have for others?
Has the divine spark of filial love gone out,
And a volcano of unnatural hate
Usurped its place? Or art thou mad, that thou
Dost dare to so insult mine and thy mother?
Carr. Cease, boy! You know not that of which you prate.
Hel. For shame, Carroll—for shame to act so!
Carr. Thou, too, thou saucy brat; and wouldst thou
Follow the track which she has made for thee?
Cath. My children—
Rich. Shall I, who bid defiance to my father
When he dared heap insult on my mother;
Shall I, who would have battled with an army,
In vindication of my mother's honor,
Be now backed down, sneered at and spit upon
By thee, who art no more than Richard's equal?
I tell thee, Carroll, thou shalt never live
To grow so great thou canst insult this lady
In my presence; and I cry thee now, beware!
Cath. Richard—Carroll—sons—
Carr. No more! No more!
Get you away, and follow your professions.
Hel. Carroll, fear you not the awful vengeance
Of Almighty God upon thee, when thou
Darest thy mother to so dishonor?
Carr. She is the author of her own dishonor—
My mother never.
Rich. Retract that, Carroll,
Or else thou makest me a fratricide.
Carr. Why, thou puny imp, what wouldst thou do?
Begone from me!
Rich. Not till thou hast withdrawn
Thy beastly saying 'gainst my mother's honor,
Or Richard brands thee the hired defamer
Of thy own mother, for thy father's gold.

Carr. Ha! boy, I will tear thee into pieces.
Rich. Thou mayst do so, Carroll, if thou canst.
Cath. My sons—
Carr. Use not that cursed name to me!
I have a dagger by me, boy; I meant
To use it here; but since thou darest say
Carroll is bribed by gold, I'll let thee use
Thine own upon me.
Rich. I am prepared. Come on!
[*They make for each other, but Catherine goes between them.*]
Cath. Hold thy yet bloodless weapons, sons of mine!
Would ye be brother murderers? If so,
Then must ye kill your mother first.
Carr. Unloose me, or this blade will find thy heart.
Cath. I am ready, Carroll; thy mother's heart
Is here. [*Carroll throws down his dagger.*]
Carr. Where am I now? The world grows black.
Richard—my father's gold—did you not say
My father's gold bribed me? I was dreaming.
Father! father! they are there—O, shame, shame!
Hinchman! Hinchman! I will be there with you!

Enter HINCHMAN *and* MALONE *from one side*; SHEBOIN *from the other.*

Hinch. What noise so loud is this?
Mal. Art thou still here?
Cath. Yes, Edmund; but I am going now.
Rich. What, mother, to leave thy home and children?
Cath. Richard, thy father drives me from my home.
Rich. O, thou unnatural husband—father!
But enough! I might rain curses on you
Till hell itself would feel the want of them;
Thy conscience be thy executioner.
Thou hast driven thy wife away from thee,
And by that act thou drivest Richard also.
Hel. And Helen, too.
Rich. And these strong arms bid thee,
And all the world, defiance, in our right.
Cath. [*To Carroll.*] Thou yet shalt know thy mother's innocence. [*Exeunt all.*

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

Scene 1.—*A room in Malone's house in San Francisco.*

Enter Hinchman *and* Malone.

Mal. Since that last night of sovereign infamy
You have seen neither Richard nor Helen?
Hinch. I know where they are but have not seen them.
Mal. I greatly fear me they are lost to us.
Hinch. Then make a grave for all your fears. Think you
That they will longer follow her fortunes,
When they shall know a court of equity—
Wherein clean-handed justice reigns supreme—
Shall have declared the woman an adultress?
But once an age does nature bear that man,
Who, for the love of it, sinks with his ship.
And when this woman is by strong evidence
Stripped of her honor, they will for honor's sake—
If not for prudence—quickly desert her.
Mal. O, Hinchman, say to me not—dishonor!
For it so rends my heart in twain to think
How woman could so lost to virtue be.
Hinch. Indeed! Ah, Malone, I am so sorry—
So very, very sorry, your heart is made
Of stuff so tender; for I must tell you—
Such my hard duty—duty over all—
That in the court we must so move our case.
Mal. Oh, me! How this affliction weighs my life.
There's not a beast that ploughs the fields nor plods
Before a drayman's heavy load, so burdened
As I am! Yet, will I bear it as becomes
A man, unflinchingly. Hinchman, have you
With Glascoe talked, touching the evidence?
Hinch. Else had my duty and friendship to you,
Illy made payment of your friendship to me.
Mal. And doubts he not of its sufficiency?
Hinch. He has assured me that the evidence
Is most abundant—well I remember
How the great man laid down the law to me.
Drawing his brows down very learnedly,

He squared his mouth, sent up his chin, and said—
Clearing his throat anon most knowingly:
"Why, my dear sir, in actions for divorce,
Upon this ground, it is unnecessary
That we should show the guilty criminals
In actual *flagrante delicto*.
Darkness and secrecy being the shield
For this crime, circumstantial evidence
Of its commission are quite sufficient.
Show a previous liking for each other,
Add to this, clandestine correspondence,
Then, in addition, stolen interviews
Going with passionate declarations,
And, ending all, the opportunity
For the consummation of the offense,
And, sir, my dear sir, I ask no better case."
Mal. We have such evidence in its fullness—
Alas! I would the case were not so strong—
As witness their love, of such long standing,
Their secret meetings, by you and Carroll seen,
Her passionate language used to him then,
The letters, and that awful night which makes
My brain burn when by memory recalled.
O, Hinchman, what havoc can a woman make!
How doth the universe, when she goes wrong,
Become a very hell! And Carroll, now,
He that was once so gentle and so kind,
Is, by her action, turned a mass of hate.
O, would her conduct were not so heinous,
Or that I were not thoroughly convinced
Of her unfaithfulness, so, for his sake,
I might forgive her and withdraw the suit.
But would it be justice to my children,
Or justice to myself, or to the world—
The morality of which we must sustain—
To longer live with such a fallen woman,
Aye, or allow her longer wear my name?
Hinch. Now, by all the honored saints in heaven,
And devils in hell, I have imagined
Myself a villain, a very large villain,
A monstrous, damned villain, but I know now,

I am a very paragon of goodness
By the side of some people I have known.
Mal. My dear Hinchman, do not, I pray of you,
Think so meanly of yourself; your action,
In laying bare the faithlessness of my wife,
Covers you with greatness, and, as for me—
Hard as the mighty burden lies upon me—
For your brave act I am profoundly grateful.
Hinch. [*Aside.*] Hinchman, out-Hinchmaned by the eternal,
But it shall cost him, else I am an angel.
My dear Malone, in view of the great value
Of my eminent services, I think
It might be well I had a small advance,
On my oft promised compensation.
Mal. Were it not best that I should pay you all
When the divorce is granted finally?
Hinch. Think not that for one moment I would doubt
Your good intentions; rather I fear me
The tenderness of your heart may overcome
Your disposition to prosecute the suit;
So all my efforts might but go for naught.
Mal. Ah, my dear Hinchman!—why, I see it all;
You are in some emergency for means.
How thoughtless of me; how much do you need?
Hinch. Well, say fifty thousand dollars.
Mal. So much!
Ah! well it is no difference, Doctor;
When one friend doth refuse to help another,
How meanly looks the act; contemptible!
Hinch. Indeed, so; and I have observed of late,
How bad the old world is become, till now,
Virtue has laid aside her past white robes
And wears the raiment of necessity—
Foul, tarnished garment! it makes the nose ill.
Mal. Indeed, I greatly fear it is the case.
I shall retire and get your check at once.
[*Exit Malone.*

Hinch. Now, who am I? A saint or nobody.
I shall no more be dead than canonized,
For between me and that other villain,

There is a chasm such as parts the throne
From purgatory's firiest furnace.
I now know the different degrees of hell!
Yet, I have heard it said a lie oft told
Becomes the truth to him who tells it;
And can it be Malone believes his wife
Untrue to him, having so often said it?

Enter CARROLL.

Ah! Carroll, you are looking very ill;
I fear me you are not so well to-day.

Carr. Indeed! now what traitors our feelings are,
I had supposed I was the first charmer
Who lives in all this mighty commonwealth.

Hinch. My dear boy, may I not give you something?

Carr. Give me something? Pardon my understanding.

Hinch. Some medicine, Carroll, some medicine.

Carr. Why, sure enough, so you are a doctor.
Your business had wellnigh slipped my memory.
But 'tis a mighty noble occupation!
For look you what great deeds it has accomplished.
Once men had sound minds in healthy bodies,
Behold the end of your herculean work!
A perfect man's the scarcest work of God!
Yes, sir; you have outwitted the Almighty,
And nature has succumbed before your efforts.
O, you are a most potent agency,
You doctors of the heavenly art
Of making well people sick, and so forth.

Hinch. But, Carroll, it were little short of crime
To make bad doctoring the creator
Of all the ills to which mankind is heir.

Carr. Very well, very well, father them where you will, it's all one to mankind—we have them. There's not one of God's human creatures in a thousand but is deformed, crippled or ill-shaped. Take the face—the eyes bleared, ball, squint, meaningless, villainous, shrewd, thieving—a hundred such to one that's fit to look on. The nose—stub, hook or crooked—an outrage on the countenance. Ah! but the mouth, flabby, open, gapping, loose, lascivious, long-lipped, short-lipped, grin-

ing or villainously taut, the head malformed and ugly generally—

Hinch. Hold, Carroll!

Carr. Hold, yourself! Look at the rest of your wonderous work! The body—fat, blubberly or lean and cadaverous; dwarfs and giants; hunchbacks and sway-backs, and deformities *ad infinitum*. O, when you see one man or woman perfect formed, behold a million malformed, ill-shaped eyesores! and where's your being but has some pain—a weak stomach, bad liver, disordered kidneys, aching bones, stiff back, decayed lungs, affected hearing, fading sight—Lord! what a thing has man degenerated into—a sickly, ill-shaped mass! Out on it! The world had better begin over again!

Hinch. But, Carroll, you look at the outer man only—his mechanism merely. Behold the inner man—the mighty mind, the pure heart, the contrite—

Carr. I think you have become a sightless old idiot! Your inner man—your mental, moral, spiritual man! Why this thing which covers us is a perfect paragon of beauty by the side of the hideous hidden devil that lurks inside. Out on your inner man! He is a very mass of corruption, dishonesty, and hypocrisy. He is the most monstrous criminal in the world—a committor of all the crimes upon the statute books every day—a murderer when ruffled; an adulterer at the sight of a pretty woman; a grasping thief each minute, a covetor of other people's property; a secret blasphemer; a notorious liar—lying even to himself; and as for that other class of crimes, called by some good people, moral errors—why, God save us!—your inner man lives on them! Hypocrisy, insinuation, prying into other people's business, and their thousand and one sisters and brothers; Oh, your inner man is a fine villain, a sharp, shrewd villain, a villain who commits most of his murders, adulteries and other crimes in thought; for mark you his outer accomplishment is as big a coward as your inner man is a villain! What a splendid thing, indeed, is your man; your inner and your outer deformity, and outrage upon nature!

Hinch. I fear me, Carroll, you look too much on the dark side of life.

Carr. O, well, very well, I would be alone, being in no mood for argument to-day.

Hinch. [*Retiring—aside.*] Then I should not like to find you when you are. [*Exit Hinchman.*

Carr. And this is life; the thing for which we're born;
For which we make our minds and bodies slaves;
To which men cling with such tenacity,
And even the crippled, blind, lame and halt,
Despised misery and crooked old age
Hold sweet—but suffering and death the end,
When death is life or may be. Out on it!
I had rather be among the tombed and rest,
Than live besmirched by such an infamy.
As passing by, each scandal-monger points
Me out, saying with readiest tongue: *There goes*
The son of—Ha! I can see the thousand
Raised glasses in every public place
Pointed at me—more deadly than cannons;
And hear the hissing viper whispers!
Oh, my soul, why, why, why, am I thus cursed?

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Charl. Carroll, are you alone?

Carr. Alone, alone, alone!
Even to the exclusion of myself.

Charl. My dearest brother, there is one now here,
By whom thou shall never be forsaken.

Carr. Why, now Charlotte, I think thou art honest;
Yet, since virtue has become an article
Of merchandise, does the world hold honor?

Charl. O, Carroll, thou wouldst not think thy sister
Otherwise than pure and virtuous?

Carr. No; for the whole world I would not think so.
Yet, come to me; I would look you in the eyes,
Feel of your flesh if you are honest made.
O, vain man who doth believe he can detect
Hypocrisy! Put your arms around my neck,
So, so. O, you minx, you can hug a man—
Kiss and betray him all in a moment.

Charl. Brother!

Carr. Nay, sister, thy touch feels honest,

So thy looks import, and so I think thee;
And I will tell thee something, the half of which,
Thou dost already know—which half a whole is
Far too great. The same woman bore us both,
And she is gone—so much thou knowest now.

Charl. And 'tis a bitter, bitter, knowledge.

Carr. Yet, will I tell thee more: that that woman
When she left took not her virtue with her,
It had gone before. Poor, little darling,
It kills my tongue to tell thee, as it doth
Thine ear to hear this. The rest thou mayst learn
By slow degrees. Leave me now Lotte dear,
For companionship with me, is not so good
As it may once have been. Thou art so weak,
And thou doth shake and tremble like a leaf!
I can feel thy heart throb; it beats in me;
I know its suffering; it is my own
That beats in thee, and I can feel it in thee,
Tugging, and straining, and trying to burst
The solid flesh that holds it prisoner.
Thou and thy brother have a common sorrow,
And on his sholders he will help thee bear it.
Leave me now. Yet, ere you go, I would vouchsafe
This little word of brotherly advice:
When you marry, let it be with some one
Not unlike you! [*Exit Charlotte.*] So soon to turn a beast!
The mother's milk that fed me's turned to gall.
By heaven I have no power to help it.

Enter HORTENS TECHNOR, *veiled.*

Horts. This is Carroll, son of Edmund Malone?

Carr. Indeed! Is it? Ah, madam, you little know
Of what surpassing wisdom you are possessed.
I would know more concerning you. Who are you?

Horts. One who knows your father, and has known him.

Carr. Wise, very wise, mysteriously wise!
I would change places with you when I think
You would be less informed than you are now.

Horts. Peace, sir. Of the trouble now existing
Between your father and mother, I know much.

Carr. Think not that you surprise me any, madam.
Being a modest looker-on in the world,
I have observed this characteristic
Of your sex; that you take on the knowledge
Of others' troubles, as if the bearing
Of the knowledge helped to bear the troubles.
Horts. Sir, I came here as your friend.
Carr. Oh! indeed!
Good, friendly madam, friends are like gnats:
In our summer-time they swarm about us,
But in our winter period, I am told,
These insects do prefer a hill of dung
To our poor company. Aye, good lady,
Friends are as abundant in this great world
As other creeping things, and yet you might,
With the finest comb scrape the universe,
And ne'er catch one. Does not the homeliness
Of my figures make you in love with them?
Horts. Sir, I should be angered at your manners,
Did I not appreciate your feelings;
But I am here to help you, and trifles,
Though unpleasant, as are these, shall not deter me.
Carr. Really, lady, your kindness is excessive.
One, of a mean and gross suspicious nature,
Might have imagined that you came hither
For some purpose other than helping me.
Horts. As is the sun from earth, so far from me
Is any other than an honest motive,
And by my acts I shall convince you, sir,
'Gainst your will, I am an honest woman.
Carr. An honest woman! Now, heaven preserve you!
How desolate and lonesome this world must seem.
Die, lady, die, and I will have a monument
Erected to you in a public place.
It shall be a stately, solid column,
Towering to the world's notice, and you
Upon the top, worked by the finest sculptor
Of the age; about you there shall be a space,
Gigantic in its proportions, crowded
With the broken statuary of your sex.
To right and left, and front a triangle;
Of broken promises of marriage one end,

Blasted virtue and foul unchastity,
The other two; then lies, hypocrisy,
Frivolity, makeshift and enticement,
Mingled among their thousand sisterhood.
Yet, shall you be made of hardest marble,
Lest, even immortalized, you fall;
For I knew a woman once, who after—
Oh, woman, if thou wert pure and honest,
Above the bribing power of money,
And unseduced by beauty, I'd grapple thee
To this breast, and hug thee till thy spirit
Freed from flesh, should take its flight to heaven!

Horts. Sir, if you should sometime see a woman,
Who, holding wealth—aye, millions in her grasp,
Would give it up; who, loving society,
Would with her own hand raise up a barrier,
Debarring her forever from its pleasures;
Who, having ambitions high, would drown them,
And sink the mightiest love that ever filled
A woman's breast; and you should know she did
All this, to save a sister from a wrong—
Would you count honest such a woman?

Carr. Aye, that I would; and since a sight like that
I never hope to see, I'd give these eyes
To look upon it.

Horts. Then, sir, behold it! [*Lifts veil.*]
My name is Hortens Technor, and here I am,
By God's good help and will, to save your mother
From an outrage, cowardly and infamous,
By a sacrifice even so great as that.

Carr. A cunning and well-spoken lie is that,
A very blackmailing lie, well worked up.
May I inquire how much she pays you for't?
Or rather, I suppose, it is Sheboin.

Horts. Never have I beheld, nor in any way
With either of them communicated.

Carr. Why, now, strange lady you! one might have thought,
On a hot charger you had come from them.
If you have aught to say, you have my ear;
Though madam, pardon me, it is so crammed
With sounds discordant, it may not hear you well.

Horts. I, too, have had my wrongs, and yet, I swear,
By even the honest man before me,
It is not they which make me tell you this,
And that my sole and only actuator,
Is the desire to lift from off a pure
And honest woman, a cloud of infamy,
With which two scoundrels have enveloped her.
Carr. An object laudable and plausible.
Yet, methinks, it sounds too well committed.
Horts. Short is my tale in words, yet long in acts,
As is a life crowded with deeds of crime.
On the occasion of your father's visit
To the city by the Golden Gate, when first
He had discovered his wealth, I met him,
And so as if some hideous black fate
O'ershadowed me, he loved me from the first.
Carr. Aha!
Horts. Or that he loved me, made pretensions great.
His honest way of wooing caused no thought
That he was other than a single man,
Nor did he mention otherwise to me.
His hotly-pressed affection by degrees
Grew on me, till at length I loved him
With all the ardor that my nature had.
Then like a fireball from an unclouded sky
Came the knowledge of your father's marriage.
Post-haste I charged him with his infamy,
And would have ended him there but that—
Carr. I listen!
Horts. His well-constructed lie, coupled with love
On my part, and his great protestations,
O'erthrew my will. This was that cunning lie
Which drove determination from her throne,
And set a foul usurper there: That his wife,
Your mother, had betrayed her marriage vows,
And that he was about to institute
Proceedings for divorce; that for my love
He wished it ended before I knew it,
And when 'twas over we should be united.
I listened, doubted, but love o'ercame me,
And I believed him. 'Twas by such means
He led me on to—alas! I cannot

Say it. O, sir, I have erred grievously,
But here I am to extirpate it all.
Carr. Ha! confessed, I thought you were a—
Horts. O, sir, condemn me not just yet; hear me:
'Twas but a night ago he came to me,
Deep-flushed with wine, and either from that cause,
Or from that other one which makes a man
Tell to a woman things which he would not
To his own mind confess, with raillery
He told me that a certain Doctor Hinchman,
Yourself, and he, had seen the faithlessness
Of your mother, and the divorce would soon
Be granted.
Carr. On, on, stop not on that!
Horts. The boldness of the act and its relator
Abashed me, and led me on to discourse
On the depravity of such a thing,
And said, above all things, it passed wonder,
How any woman could to him be faithless.
This seemed to touch him in a tender point,
For straight a solemn aspect overcame
His raillery; then he paused; then wavered;
And then, with a shrewd cunning in his eye,
He winked and said he would confess to me—
To only me—for that, in me, he had
Such confidence, he knew I would not tell it,
That it was naught but talk and balderdash
About his wife's unfaithfulness to him.
Carr. Woman, let what you say be true, or die!
Horts. So is it, word for word; and more he said:
That the appearance of your mother's guilt,
Had been produced by Hinchman and himself,
To furnish evidence for the divorce.
Carr. This is a lie! I saw it all myself.
Horts. Nay, hold! and I will tell you of that, too.
At such tremendous infamy I grew
Indignant, and formed the resolution,
Then and there, to save your mother from it.
To which end I gave him good encouragement
To tell me all, with a pleased mien my purpose
Well concealing. Then he related to me
The dreadful story of that awful night,

When he led you, his son!—O, sovereign shame!—
To look into the window of some house,
There to behold your mother and Sheboin.
Carr. O, kill, and not refresh my memory!
Horts. Wait, sir! 'Twas not your mother nor Sheboin
You saw, but two masked bawds, by Hinchman's hand,
Cunningly disposed there to deceive you.
Carr. Go on, liar! Tell me I am not here;
Tell me the world is not; disprove my being;
Show that the sun is but a red-hot pot,
By the blowing of the cook's breath kept so.
I am a little baby, to be told
Of giants, goblins, fairies, devils, gods.
Come, be my nurse, fair lady; sing a song.
Horts. O, sir! I see that you believe me not.
Then, since you will not take my word, take me,
And put me where to tell a lie is death.
Take me to mid-ocean, to some high peak,
Or to a lion's cage, and then tell me
To take that back which I have told to you,
Or you will cast me bound among the furies.
Do this, or anything, and I will say
The same. Sir, I plead not for my own wrongs;
For nothing but disgrace can this bring me.
I plead for yours and for your mother's sake.
Carr. Will you face my father and say these things?
Horts. Face him, face heaven, face hell, face courts of earth,
Face any place, if only I can save
From this disgrace your outraged mother.
Carr. Lady, thy words are noble, and if thy acts
Keep tally with them, thou mayst have this life.
But mark thee, I will put thee to the test;
And failing, rest everlasting infamy
Upon you! Take yonder room, and anon
I will explain what I would have you do.

[*Exit Hortens.*

That this woman knows my father, I believe;
That she knows not my mother, seemeth true.
Still, have I little faith in this adventure,
It is so like a dream—a sudden dream.

Yet can these matters be no worse than now;
And knowing where they stay, I'll send for them,
Making them one and all so face each other
As shall try their several honesty.

[*Exit Carroll.*

SCENE II.—*Another room in same.*

Enter CARROLL *and* HORTENS.

Carr. And, lady, thou wouldst honest prove thyself?
Horts. Aye, sir; but bring my purpose to the test.
Carr. Thou shalt have tests, and tests, and tests, fear not.
Rather wilt thou be equal to the same?
Horts. I will.
Carr. Why, now, I like the way thou sayst "I will."
Come, let me look into thy face, for 'tis
A spring from which outleaps the hidden secrets
Of the human soul. There's meaning in thy mouth,
And it is not one loose, lascivious,
Speaking a yielding and lascivious soul.
I think thy thin lips, and these taut, white lines
About their corners, call thee determined;
And I like the stare and flash of thy eyes—
The fixed expression of thy face as well;
Combined, they show in thee some settled purpose.
Well, well, we shall soon see whether thou art
Naught but a base and gilded counterfeit.
Horts. Sir, will you not say what you expect of me?
Carr. What I expect of thee? O, woman!
I have not dared allow my expectation
Flower, but have nipped off each tender bud,
And planted it all in soil most sterile.
But should I tell thee that of everything
Which I would have thee do, it would be this:
Prove, O, prove my mother that pure angel
I was wont to think her ere damnation came!
Horts. To do this is the end and not the means.
I thought you had laid out a course for me.
Carr. Thou art the actress, lady—not I;
And howsoever good my piece might be,
If you fail in the acting, it is naught.
Generally speaking, I would have thee

Stand steadfast and unyielding through it all.
As to the particulars of your acts,
I have provided a little instrument
Of man's first inventive genius typical.
[*Produces a dagger.*
What! dost thou shudder and start back from this?
Horts. O, sir!
Carr. Listen! If all the men this little devil
And his brothers, long and short, have taken off,
Were in one mighty heap piled up, they'd make
A pyramid of human skeletons,
Piercing the skies. Booming, noisy cannon
They have made ashamed, and the smaller guns
Hold but a lot in this great master's graveyard.
And look at its bright and glistening sides.
Is it not wonderful how man can take
The black and shapeless metal from the earth,
And make a thing of such exquisiteness?
How sharp its edges, that the keenest eye
Scarcely can see them; and that little point!
Is it not a wonderful instrument,
Possessing a most wonderful record
For killing kings, betrayers, seducers,
And men in general? For, mark you well,
When this blade cuts through the heart, or the lungs,
Or skull, or rips open the intestines
Of a man, not all the quackery invented
Can scarcely save him. What! dost thou draw back
From such an honest, unassuming thing?
Horts. I am but a woman, sir; not over strong,
And ill accustomed to such sights and words.
I pray you, nothing you expect of me
Shall have in common anything with this?
Carr. Ha, woman! now you show you as you are.
Confess yourself dishonest, and withdraw.
Horts. I swear to you that I am honest, sir;
Yet is my honesty but womanly
And human. But stay not; I will do all,
And doing it in honesty, fear nothing.
Carr. Thou shalt come before my father, madam.
Horts. I am ready, and willingly will meet him.
Carr. What if he should deny he ever knew you?

Or that he ever said what you have told me?
Or should denounce you as a woman of the town?
Horts. He will not dare. By heavens, he will not dare!
Carr. Aye, but should he? Canst thou take this dagger
In thy hand, and, holding it 'gainst his heart,
Unseal his lips, and make the truth fly out?—
Or wouldst thou rather suffer the branding
Of dishonor? [*She reaches for dagger.*] Ha! now I like thy looks.
Good! Good! Go you now into yonder room,
And when you hear me strike upon this stand,
Enter, and then conduct you as you will.
Horts. Sir, I would I might be more acquainted
How I am to act in this strange meeting.
Carr. Go thou, and let thy inmost honesty,
And the inspirations of the moment,
Be thy sole guides. Stay a little, lady.
O, if thou didst but know what suffering
This heart has stood—what torturing this brain—
Thou wouldst forgive me for my harshness.
And O, if thou canst only take away
That cursed stigma, why, thou mayst have me
For thy bondman all thy life. Go thee now,
And within thee, strong be thy woman's heart.
[*Exit Hortens.*
She hath an honest manner in her acts,
Which in her favor greatly doth impress me.
Out upon honest manners since I have seen
Such hell-born hypocrisy dressed in ways
Which would have honored heaven's oldest saint!
For either my father be infamous,
And this woman honest; or he honest,
And she infamous; or both infamous,
And robed in honesty; and, any way,
Honest looks have the last time deceived me.
Yet she can have no motives but honest ones.
To hell with motives, too! for mark this down
Upon the tablet of my memory:
Men do acts devoid of any motives
Which human ingenuity can see.
Quiet! here come my mother and the rest.

Enter CATHERINE, SHEBOIN, RICHARD *and* HELEN.

Cath. My son!
Carr. Nay, madam, not another word.
'Twas for another that I sent for you.
She. What want you with us that you brought us here?
Carr. In good time I hope you may find out.
Behind yonder screen I have provided
Places for you. Take them, and abide events.
Rich. This is a very strange proceeding.
Hel. I know it can import no good to us.
Cath. Patience, my children. As you bid us, son.
[*They secrete themselves behind screen.*
Carr. Now to bring Hinchman and my father here.
[*Exit Carroll.*

Re-enter CARROLL, HINCHMAN *and* MALONE.

Mal. What want you with us, Carroll, in such haste?
Carr. In short, to hold some counsel with you both,
Touching the subject of your impending suit.
Not that the matter is a pleasant one,
But since to meet and fight it we are compelled,
'Twere best we be prepared against the tricks
Of the opposing counsel. What answers
Your wife to your petition for divorce?
Mal. Oh, Carroll! I would we might avoid it.
Carr. Stuff, sir! Be man, not child. What says she?
Mal. She denies her guilt, and pleads cruelty
Against me as ground for divorce from me.
Carr. The very boldness of a denial
Such as that covers one with amazement.
Can she have hope to escape the proving
Of her repeated criminality?
Mal. Carroll, do not, I pray, refer to it.
It wrings my heart, and heaven knows how glad
Would I be here to end it all forever,
Did such a course not bring such infamy—
Such foul infamy—upon my children.
Carr. Sir, if you have not more manhood in you
Than to talk of letting such dishonor

Pass unnoticed—aye, condoned, forgiven—
I shall be justified in classing you
Among the apes, gratefully thanking God
My parentage is doubtful. Full, complete,
Is the evidence of her adultery.

Cath. Oh, God! No, no, no!

Carr. What, spies! What's here? [*Knocks over screen.*]
By heavens, the very criminals themselves! [*Strikes table.*]
Infamy, thou hast reached thy highest tide
When these things be!

Enter HORTENS.

More coming to the feast?
Ha! this woman is some confederate.
[*Aside.*] Now let them work it out—it's not my play.

Mal. Hortens! What's this? Why are you here, madam?

Horts. The disappointment is most agreeable.
I was afraid you might not have known me.

Carr. [*Aside.*] The start is fair.

Cath. Amazement strikes me dumb! Who are you, lady?
For never before did these eyes see you.
No answer? Maurice, know you who she is?

She. Till now I never saw her.

Carr. [*Aside.*] Well, very well.

Horts. I am none would harm you, madam—fear not;
But am come here to help you, if you will.

Hinch. There's villainy here. [*To Malone.*] Who is this woman?

Mal. I know her not.

Carr. [*Aside.*] Ha!

Hinch. You know her not? Why, but a moment since,
You called her Hortens.

Carr. [*Aside.*] Well said, old fool.

Horts. So heard you all, and then he spake the truth.
But this last moment, mysteriously,
Has blotted me from out his memory,
Or else some other, greater recollection,

Has engulfed the one of me; possibly,
Since he has made confession unto me
Of your combined and villainous attempt
To ruin yonder woman, he has good cause
No longer to remember me.

Carr. [*Aside.*] See, O, my soul, how strong she strikes him home!

Hinch. Confessed to her? O, you old imbecile!
I see it all! You have ruined your cause
By making a priest of your sweet mistress.
Well, I am done with you! Dismiss your suit;
Settle with your wife; for Hinchman leaves you.
I had rather be a dog than a fool.

Carr. Going, Hinchman? What, run from a woman?
I'll make you a free loan of my courage
To help you stay. [*Stops him.*] What say you to this woman? [*To Malone.*]

Mal. That what she says is all a wilful lie,
And that I never told her aught of it.

Horts. Never told me that the unfaithfulness
Of your wife was but a scheme concocted
To furnish evidence for a divorce?
O, thou coward—liar!

Carr. [*Aside.*] Gods, give her courage.

Cath. Alas, that I have lived to see this day!

Mal. Thou blackmailing street-tramper, how dare you
Dun my way like this? I never wronged you.

Horts. Dare you call me blackmailer?

Mal. Aye; and more,
Thou scurvy strumpet, since this be my reply,
Thou ungrateful and degraded woman.

Horts. Seest thou this dagger?

Cath. Stop! Richard! Carroll!
Look to her, Maurice!

Horts. Nay, do not touch me.
I only know one action now—'tis here—
And may not be responsible for others.
I am upon you, coward! Confess or die.

Cath. O, spare his life! 'Tis I am wronged, not thee.

Horts. Yes, thou art wronged in me, and I in thee;
And for our common wrongs, I will kill you.

Mal. Oh, Hortens, is it for this that I have loved thee?
Carr. Ha! loved.
Hinch. Who'd beg for life deserves but death.
Carr. Enough! Enough! He has confessed enough.
And thou art pure, O, holy, holy mother!
Cath. O, miserable woman Catherine is,
The day that proves her honest, stabs her thus!
Carr. Mother, I know not what to say. My tongue
In my sheer amazement, is, like one asleep.
Yet if, by any mighty act—some deed
Surpassing human strength or bravery,
Or by some action God-like in its virtue—
I could convince thee of my overwhelming love,
And prove that naught but honor has inspired
My every word and thought and act—oh, then
I could with patience bear torments of hell.
Cath. Thy mother knew thy love, and for it loved thee;
She knew thy honor, and for it honored thee;
And for thy every word and act, she did,
Ere they were passed, forgive thee, loving thee still.
And with a mother's love, which doth surpass
All other in this world, opens her arms
To take thee to her heart, oh, thou, my son!
[*Carroll starts to go to Catherine, when*

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Oh, horrible! Oh, awful! Charlotte's dead. I found her strangled in her room, just now, and at her feet this paper.
Carr. Give it me [*reads*]: "Death before life and infamy."
My noble girl—my royal little sister!
O, Charlotte, thou art brave, and I a coward!
Why, I am but a very piece of flesh,
And thou wert soul. To thee, to thee, Charlotte!
Thou worthiest example for thy brother,
Ere long by thee will Carroll be. Oh, earth,
Thou coward earth!
Cath. Oh, woeful, woeful day!
Horts. [*To Malone.*] Thou thrice-accursed liar, traitor, coward!

Thou art the cause of all this misery.
Look on thy hellish work—one daughter dead,
The other as thou seest; and look upon
These sons of thine; well mayst thou hang thy head.
And then look on that wife—thy loving wife—
And this thy faithful friend, than but for whom,
To-day thou hadst but been a common miner.
And last, see me, whom thou hast more than murdered—
Disgraced, dishonored, robbed of virtue, damned!
One moment since, and thou didst call me strumpet.
Then if I be so, here do I bury
In thy accursed breast my tarnished honor,
And may its poison stay with thee forever! [*Stabs him.*]
No, no! Away from me! [*Stabs herself.*] Thus, also, I.

Carr. More, more, more blood! Hinchman, thy turn is next.

Hinch. Whatever will be, will; I have no care.

Carr. Then with thee take thy fair philosophy. [*Stabs him.*]

Cath. I cry you mercy, Carroll, oh, my son!

Carr. My dearest mother, quiet all thy fears.
Death to those only who deserve to die.
Thou art pure; thou didst no wrong; nor thou, Maurice;
Nor you, Richard; nor you, Helen. But I—
Why, what a thing am I? Deformed in mind,
Ill-balanced, and but the subject to fill up
A dungeon. Yet is the bitter cup made sweet,
When dying, know the living do not curse them.
And in the future, should any ask of me,
Tell him of one who rather had been dead
Than live the son of such a man as that.

Cath. Nay, Carroll, nay; live thou for me.

Carr. Too late!
Charlotte, thou reached the period of thy life
When thou didst think thy mother was unchaste.
Now that I know my father was so great
A villain, do I thus make an end of mine. [*Stabs himself.*]
Mother, thine honor, oh, how bright it is!
There's not a star in heaven shines so lustrous.
Thine arms! I am a little child again;
And on thy breast, which fed it, yield my life.
Charlotte, Charlotte! I come, I come, Charlotte! [*Dies.*]

Cath. No more, no more! Let death be satisfied.
My two remaining children, come about me;
And thou, dear friend, help me lament my loss.
O, desolation, thou hast done thy worst!
My husband dead, his good name dishonored—
To judgment gone with all his sins upon him;
My children, by their own hands, their sweet lives taken.
Thou Great Eternal Power, reliance
Of poor Catherine in her every hour,
On these dear souls let heavenly mercy rest.

THE END.

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